

Church Women

in the
Scheme
of Things

BY MOSSIE ALLMAN WYKER

Church Women in the Scheme of Things

By **MOSSIE ALLMAN WYKER**
(Mrs. James D. Wyker)

From one of today's most potent women speakers and capable administrators comes this dynamic new book of hope and expectancy for all that church women may yet become. Mrs. Wyker writes to *stir the church*, and particularly its women members; and to show how church women are *essential* "in the scheme of things."

She discusses how women can learn techniques for achieving without being militant . . . how they can get from the New Testament the right perspective about themselves . . . how the church is losing many women capable of serving at policy-making levels, because it has not seen the need for women being a part of the total life of the church—using their minds as well as their hands . . . the church woman and ordination in the various Protestant faiths . . . how women have lifted themselves in recent years to their legitimate place in serving their country . . . the areas in which United Church Women are making significant contributions throughout the world . . . the areas needing immediate attention—a greater degree of fellowship with women's secular organizations and working with women of other religious faiths.

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To
THE UNITED CHURCH WOMEN OF AMERICA

*this book is affectionately dedicated
with complete faith in
what they may yet become*

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And, to my husband, severest critic of all!

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The Christian gospel in pure form always emancipates women from any second-class position in which a culture or society has placed them, affording them a new respect and position based upon their rightful status as beloved daughters of the Heavenly King. Nevertheless, the church has been exceedingly slow to give to women any adequate place in its councils and ministries. The reasons for this slowness have been both good and bad. Among the good reasons has been the wise refusal of the church to treat women as if they were identical with men—in a weaker form with certain feminine disabilities—after the fashion of many secular groups such as the Marxists. Another good reason has been the conservatism of a church that tries to base its practices upon the authority of the Scriptures rather than upon the fad of the moment.

The poor reasons have been: (1) Another kind of conservatism which is sure that old ways are always better than new and is, therefore, blind to the social and

economic changes that have deeply affected the place of women in our culture; (2) an inadequate, unhistorical, atomistic, and literalistic interpretation of the Scriptures which has justified ancient prohibitions by appeals to certain verses of St. Paul which the apostle himself would doubtless repudiate.

A living church, relying upon the freedom of a more adequate interpretation of the Scriptures, has before it the creative task of finding for today the right place and places for women so that they may be able to make their fullest contribution to Christ and His Church.

In approaching this task the church must assume neither that women and men must always do the same services nor that the inherited patterns of a conservative past are to determine the pattern for today and tomorrow.

—Dr. Eugene Clarke Blake, Stated Clerk
The Presbyterian Church in the
United States of America

FOREWORD

THIS IS A BOOK OF HOPE and expectancy for all that church women may yet become! It is not interested in setting women up as rivals to men, because the fact is well established that men and women complement each other. It recognizes no "superiority" in men, nor in women! The frailty of the human race is too evident for us to spend time debating who is superior to whom. Set up any criteria, and some women are superior to some men—or vice versa.

This book does not plead for "equal rights" for women but for equal opportunities. It is granted that some men can stand certain physical strain that certain women cannot, and that during the period of childbirth, and during the children's formative years, women need certain protection. But it *does* attempt to say that in the realm of the mental and spiritual, no sex is *superior*, and ALL persons should have equal opportunity to use their God-given talents and abilities.

This book is not a scholarly treatise, nor does it attempt to comply with biblical criticism. It is written for church people, generally, and the writer does not presume to give a critical analysis of the scripture used. She believes that each illustration she has taken from the New Testament comes from what people knew about Jesus. For example, whether or not the story of the adulterous woman is authentic, the record is entirely in accord with the life and teachings of Jesus.

This book does not attempt to list all of the denominations that ordain women, nor those according to them FULL MEMBERSHIP in the church (if there are any!). It does not attempt to give the whole scope of the program and services of United Church Women.

This book *is* written to STIR THE CHURCH and particularly its women members. Time is fast running out, and no group should be required to keep proving its intellectual and spiritual assets. We need to turn our united efforts toward finding solutions to problems which beset the world, and in making the life and teachings of our Lord so real that the problems may be solved.

Church Women are essential "in the scheme of things"!

MOSSIE ALLMAN WYKER

Columbia, Mo.
September, 1953.

The Church Woman's Opportunity

We cannot afford to have a system of perpetual purdah in the Christian church. Rather than limiting the women of the church to quiet influences behind the ecclesiastical screen while the men take over all the public responsibilities, we should now in the equality of Christ and the gospel place the gavel of the church in feminine hands also, in order that there may be added to the convention rostrum, the pulpit, and the highest policy-making councils of Twentieth Century Christendom the radiant grace and initiative of our finest church women.

Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg, Minister
Delmar Baptist Church
St. Louis, Missouri

CHAPTER I

The Church Woman's Opportunity

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL STRENGTH of ten million United Church Women?

Inert and indifferent, they can be content with their own homes and communities, and their denominational organized work, not realizing that their UNITED efforts can help provide an alternative to communism, ignorance, sin, poverty, and need. Aroused, concerned, and UNITED, they can be an effective influence for righteousness in the nation and in the world at this critical hour in world history.

Church women are aware of the fact that they are living in an era of confusion and chaos. They believe, as must all Christians, that the answers to our national problems do not rest alone on the decisions and wisdom of the people, but upon their reliance in that POWER back of the universe—God, the Father of all mankind. Most of all, they realize that we must not capitulate to fear. If those fundamental religious concepts on which our nation was founded are right, they are still our greatest hope, and we will continue to have courage if we hold to them. Fear paralyzes resistance to fear. We dare not be afraid!

In the changing world scene, church women are becoming restless. They are not content with "second-class" membership in the church. They have varieties of talents to be used. There always will be those women who are happiest when they are serving church dinners, raising money for local support and the missionary enterprise, and being "pastors' helpers." *They deserve great appreciation.*

However, there are others, wanting also to serve the church, who believe their best contribution can be made at policy-making levels. A businesswoman, for instance, may be of greater service on the Board of Trustees, helping with the business matters of the church, than on the dinner committee. There are also women who love and believe in the church above all other institutions and who long to serve it professionally as women serve in other areas such as education, law, medicine, and business.

This writer has great faith in what church women can become and achieve over and above the traditional service which has been "allowed" them in the past. We must earn it, but I prophesy that if we continue to mature spiritually, educationally, and emotionally, the day is not far distant when we will be granted "full membership" in the church.

This is a day of opportunity for women. We can review history and sigh over all that women have not been allowed to do. We can lament and grow cynical over the fact that one-half of the human race could decree that the other half should stay in its "place," and also could decree what that place should be! We can bemoan the fact that for so long a time, as women

yearned to study, to understand, to know, they were told that if they would get and keep husbands, they must appear to know little. Scripture was quoted to them, "If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home."¹

Public education has swung wide the door of opportunity for all women, and it is the way of education that the more one learns, the more eager is that person to know more. So, wanting a home, husband, and children, yet driven always by this person who is herself, with a longing to "become," woman has been baffled and insecure. In spite of all the handicaps, however, she has pushed steadily onward.

Many honest women are asking, "Has it really been the fault of men, or could we have accomplished more if we as women had sincerely wanted this freedom and had been willing to *earn* our rights and privileges?"

Great is the opportunity of church women today, for they have resources of spiritual power and inner security which make it possible for them to assume the initiative in their communities. They, not knowing that barriers are irremovable, proceed to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks.

But women are restless in the church. They have been told by a woman theologian that the church is the last stronghold of male domination. They look around and see that women have entered all professions—education, law, medicine, government, business—and are attaining distinction. Yet in the church, established for the perpetuation of the teachings of their Lord, women remain "second-class" members.

¹I Cor. 14:35.

They may perform some of the functional tasks of the church. They are allowed to give as much financial support as they care to. They may serve church dinners and raise money for the local church and for missions. They may make church calls and help in church projects. Their service at policy-making levels, however, has been achieved more slowly, and the privilege of being a minister of the gospel for those few who so desire has been almost impossible. Who is really to blame? Is it the men alone? Very often *women* have been heard to assert that a woman should not serve on a national board with men—that was not her “place”! And as for ordination—well!

Church women should restudy their New Testament and get the right perspective about *themselves*. Those women deserve sympathy who dress in mannish style and become very assertive as they “look wistfully to the other side,” longing to be men. If we are born women, then women we must be! The first step in achieving a normal, balanced life is to accept ourselves as women and rejoice in that privilege. For Christians, this is especially true; in no other area is so much offered for the development of a full, rounded life as to those who are followers of that One called “The Christ.”

How can anyone read the life and teachings of Jesus and ever feel imprisoned? Others may restrict us (even in His name) but He did not imprison, He freed. If we believe that He is our guide, then we go steadily ahead.

A group of church leaders coming together to consider the “status and service of women in American

churches" was asked in preparation for the meeting, "Will you restudy the New Testament, particularly the Four Gospels, and try to answer the question, 'What is the will of God for women and their service in the church?'" "

A church historian wrote, "You cannot answer this question by just asking what *Jesus* says. He treated individuals, all individuals, kindly and exactly alike. *But there was no church.* You have to study Acts and Paul, to see how the New Testament church interpreted Jesus' teachings and practice."

That is true if one accepts the early church as final authority, but if one insists upon going to the source of Paul's authority, which is enduring and universal for all Christians, then it is Jesus who determines our standards. He did not organize a church. He left followers, both men and women, and they did the organizing. That seemed the best way to continue His work. Final authority, however, still rests in His teachings and not in the church; at least, many so believe. Therefore, we must study our New Testament to find this freedom for which all mankind longs.

We discover that His birth, according to Luke, was foretold to a woman¹ and how we thrill to her glorious Magnificat,² sung as she realized that she had been chosen to be the mother of the Messiah. Her song echoes in the hearts of all true mothers when they look forward to motherhood. It was to a woman that Jesus foretold his Messiahship, according to John. In

¹Luke 1:26-36.

²Luke 1:46-56.

talking at the well to the woman of Samaria he broke several barriers: the barrier of sex, because His disciples were surprised to find Him speaking to a woman; the barrier of race, for He was talking with a Samaritan; the barrier of religion, because she was considered to be a Gentile. It was to this woman when she said, "I know that Messiah is coming," that Jesus replied, "I who speak to you am he."² It was to the women after His resurrection that he said, "Go tell."³ These women were the first to "bear the good tidings." And there are those who yet say that Jesus did not use women in His ministry!

Women recall with appreciation the story of the woman accused of committing adultery. It was the men who brought her to Jesus, demanding that she be punished. We wonder why they did not also bring the man who must have had some responsibility in the matter. At any rate, Jesus calmly considered their demands, then turned and wrote in the sand, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." One by one the men dropped their stones, rebuked.⁴

Someone recently commented, "It seems there were so many *women* who had sinned and who came to Jesus wanting forgiveness." I was reminded of a jingle handed to me one day in a meeting (I do not know the author): "Woman weeps o'er sins she's done, and makes them seem like double; man straightway forgives himself, and saves the Lord the trouble."

²John 4:7-27.

³Matt. 28:7.

⁴John 7:53—8:11.

It was Jesus who taught that we are not male nor female but children of God. Then we are not servants nor slaves but part of a family—the household of God.

We remember two statements given by a respected leader of the church, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters,"¹ and "Wives, be subject to your husbands."² We know today that the first statement is obsolete, and we are beginning to believe the other is also. We are asking modern theologians to rethink these statements for us, using the Revised Standard Version of the Bible! We must remember that this leader spoke out of the social customs of his day and also that Christianity allowed women greater privileges than did the pagan world around them. This same leader ordered women not to cut their hair and told them always to wear veils in public.³ Certainly few women who today enjoy the comfort of short hair would want to go back to those hallowed days of long tresses; and if we attempted to wear those oriental veils in modern American traffic, we would all be killed. But Paul's real concern should be our concern today. He believed that a good woman should keep that certain reserve, that inner refinement so essential to true womanhood in any generation. With the firm conviction that Jesus accepted women as persons and in His ministry used them to the limit of their training and ability, we then can decide how each of us will follow the dictates of our hearts and find our own best way to serve Him. The opportunities are

¹Eph. 6:5.

²Eph. 5:22.

³I Cor. 11:5-7.

limitless if we work in His spirit as channels through which His work may go forward.

We must come to the realization that though probably we shall be always a part of some family, we are primarily persons in our own right. We are responsible to God for our own lives—not, ultimately, for our husbands or our children, our organizations or our relatives, but for our own stewardship and service. Therefore, we rejoice in our freedom given us through Christ. We accept joyfully our status in being “a woman in the scheme of things,” for in the laboratory of today’s experience it is being demonstrated that woman’s intelligence and ability are comparable to man’s. Absolute honesty requires us to say that whatever a woman wants to become she can, if she follows the directives she receives in her daily periods of meditation and honestly works in the spirit of her Lord. Certainly a woman should not feel she should serve on policy-making boards or receive ordination if she does not care to do so, but it is hardly fair for her to decide what someone else should do.

It is a revelation when one discovers for herself a technique for achieving without being militant. A well-known church woman shares her experience in these words:

“I so well remember my first revelation and discovery. I lived on a street where I was the only girl my age in the midst of several boys—two brothers, and their friends—who formed the ‘gang.’ I could cut out paper dolls and play house all I wanted to by myself but it was a lonely business. Interest in such activities

seemed to dim as I watched the boys in their lively games of Indian and cowboy and 'catch as catch can.' A girl cousin who visited us occasionally joined me in longing to be a part of it but 'Girls, gosh!' came scornfully from the members of the gang. Our first attempt at being a part of the cherished group came in begging quilts from my mother and in making tents far better than any which had been erected. These were recognized as such, grudgingly accepted, and used. But we were still not a part of the gang. We sat in a wigwam, wearily leaned our heads against the center pole and meditated. If only one could get that cherished rating of 'chief!' Our stormy demands to be accepted and to have our rights acknowledged got us nowhere. I suddenly realized that I would have to be able to ride the pony and stay on no matter how swift the ride; I must be able to run faster and for a greater distance than any of the boys; and I would have to be able to think faster and with greater decision than any of the gang. *That made you chief!* Even at the age of ten I knew that being a girl I never could make it if I could not do better than their best. So it was up to me. Never shall I forget that day when the slow, drawling voice of the older boy came as from a great distance, 'You know, maybe she can do it. Let's make her chief!' This woman is one of the many who have learned that technique.

Another testimony comes from a woman who is ordained although she never intended to be. She had dedicated her life to full-time Christian service and planned to be a national youth leader. However, as

so often rightly happens, along came a young man who persuaded her to change her mind and become a minister's *wife*. As she studied the situation, she decided there could be no better place for full-time Christian service than in a parsonage home. However, as they went on in their preparation for the ministry, occasionally she supplied for her husband in his student pastorates. She had never known greater joy than being in those pulpits, sharing with others her faith and Christian convictions. She took more Bible courses and pastoral theology. She learned that a sermon must have an introduction, three points, and a conclusion. Her husband was a hard taskmaster. "Get more 'meat' into them," he kept insisting. "The people like you, they like what you say, but you aren't saying anything." So she struggled on.

Then one day he thoroughly stunned her. They were going into the rural ministry; he would be away from the parish a good deal in interdenominational work; there would be few lay leaders. She too must be ordained to serve as a minister. She resisted and struggled. What would people think? What would they say? But he never gave up until he achieved this goal. Because they were going into the rural ministry, they decided they would not be ordained at the seminary. They would return to the rural home they loved and there in front of the fireplace, the double ordination would take place. So it was that the minister and elders came and, side by side, this couple received the rites of ordination. The realization came to her then how difficult would be the way. Her husband would be accepted. She would be allowed to serve only

as she earned that privilege with custom and prejudice against her. She must never be aggressive nor too eager.

They had been serving for some time, she as the minister's wife only, when the local doctor's wife died. She left a letter asking that the minister have charge of her funeral but requesting that his wife give the funeral sermon. Clothed in her black dress and trim white collar, the "woman minister" did the best she could. After that, she was accepted. She buried and married and administered communion, but every step of the way she walked with caution and discretion. The opportunities are there if women have the consecration and the training to use them.

From the President's Annual Report, The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, June 5, 1905, we read:

"The number of our students during the session now closing is the greatest reported for many years . . . in our list you will find the names of five women, one of them a married woman, wife of a male student. These were matriculated on the responsibility of the faculty because of their desire to study the Bible as a means of greater efficiency in the work of the Sunday school and of missions. Two of them are candidates for foreign mission work and one is to go to Japan within a few weeks. We trust that the Board will approve this innovation. Someone remarked, after we had admitted some of these, that they will soon be turning out female preachers; *but I replied, that by the time they studied the Scriptures with us they will learn that women are not to be preachers.*—J. W. McGarvey, President."

This statement would be discouraging if we did not remember what a real innovation it was to have *five women* in a seminary, not a Girls' Academy, in 1905.

In answer to an inquiry, Dr. Riley B. Montgomery, now president of The College of the Bible, has written, under date of June 15, 1953:

"The College of the Bible accepts women for the Bachelor of Divinity degree because we believe that women should have the opportunity to share equally with men in Christian work and leadership. Among Disciples of Christ churches, women may accept calls to churches as ministers and perform all the responsibilities that are called for in the pastorate of churches. We believe that if women desire to prepare themselves for the pastoral ministry they should have the opportunity to do so.

"For those women who wish to major in the field of Religious Education, it is our feeling that they would be better workers in that field if they would work for the Bachelor of Divinity degree, which would give them a broader theological education than if they took the briefer course leading to the Master of Religious Education. We have courses leading to both degrees but we are increasingly encouraging all students, men and women, who plan to work in the field of Religious Education, to work toward the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

"We believe that women should have the same right to ordination for any position in the church that is accorded to men. Our educational program is planned on the basis of this belief. Though the function of ordination among Disciples of Christ is a function of the

local church, The College of the Bible shares in this responsibility with the local churches when they are ordaining graduates from our institutions. *We would recommend women to the local churches for ordination as readily as we would men.*

“All of this policy and practice on the part of The College of the Bible in its educational program, as well as with respect to ordination, is in line with the policies and practices of the Disciples of Christ as a religious body.”¹

Can the women of the Disciples of Christ read this statement and believe that it is *the men* today who are holding us back? Perhaps this is indicative of the changing scene regarding women and their status and service in the church.

What opportunities do church women really want?

¹Personal letter to the author.

The Church Woman's Service at Policy-Making Levels

The New Testament mentions by name a score of women who were active in the early church. Today we need more than ever the spiritual insights, devotion and leadership of Christian women, not only in local churches but also in the policy-making councils of the Christian movement throughout the world.'

Dr. Frank W. Price, Moderator
The Presbyterian Church in the
United States

CHAPTER II

The Church Woman's Service at Policy-Making Levels

UP UNTIL THE CHRISTIAN ERA the individual was of little worth as a person. A vast proportion of men were good only for slaves, the women for the harems, and the children were good for nothing! The church, the state, the class, the race, the institution always took precedence over the individual. Jesus by His attitude and practice set aside these ancient concepts and, in their place, elevated the individual as supreme. He notes God's concern for each bird, then says to His audience, "Are you not of more value than they?"¹ The parables of the Lost Sheep² and the Lost Coin,³ likewise, declare the supreme value of the individual.

Jesus rebuked the Disciples saying: "Let the children come . . . to such belongs the kingdom of God."⁴

It was Jesus who, in the same way, elevated women and gave them a place never before accorded them.

In the United States, women have made great progress in their development, particularly in the areas of

¹Matt. 6:26.

²Matt. 18:12-15.

³Luke 15:8-11.

⁴Luke 18:16.

business and professional life. It is clear, however, that they do not consider their efforts finished even though they are now working in most fields and are receiving a fairly satisfactory financial reward for their work. Some groups are demanding "equal rights," but because of existing laws regarding the protection of women and children, others insist only that they receive "equal pay for equal work." They do not want to be penalized because they are women.

Significant achievement for *church* women has been a much slower process. Even though the church in Europe was established at a prayer meeting, arranged by a businesswoman who was the first convert, and even though women were used and recognized in the early church, we admit that down to modern times they have known segregation and discrimination within the church. Women would not be justified, however, in becoming discouraged. Too much is happening too rapidly for them to believe that this is a "losing game."

We take heart that from the beginning of His ministry Jesus used the contribution which women had to make. He was grateful for their ability to comprehend quickly His message and His ministry, and for their great courage as they gave themselves utterly to serving Him.

In a book of missionary addresses, written in 1895, A. McLean has a chapter on "Women and the Gospel." He writes: "Speaking of women as related to Christ, one of the poets has said:

*Not she with traitorous kiss the Master stung,
Not she reviled Him with unholy tongue;*

*She, when apostle fled, could danger brave,
Last at the Cross, and earliest at the grave.”¹*

The women have never doubted that (since He released them and used them in His ministry) Jesus intended they should continue to grow “in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.”²

Their struggle for intellectual freedom has been a thrilling one. Not allowed to attend colleges and universities because it was not “ladylike” to learn from books beyond the arts, the women never rested until they had their own institutions of learning and demonstrated that their minds were given them to use.

Joyously, many women have risen from the bondage of being “frail, delicate, fainting females” to the place where their bodies are firm and sturdy; where they can walk as true partners with men. They are still very feminine and eager to play a woman’s part in the world, but they are weary of being forced to appear fragile and to play the role of a clinging vine. They want the freedom that comes from good health and vitality and the privilege of walking life’s way with men as companions without dragging their heels!

They believe by their service to the church as “Marthas” and by the ministry of their “Marys” (in so far as the “Marys” are “allowed” to serve) they are growing in favor with God.

It is at the point of growing in favor with *man* that the women have been most discouraged. That is—within the church.

¹*Missionary Addresses*—Christian Publishing Company.

²Luke 2:52.

Women, through the centuries, have grown very familiar with the name of Paul. Some of them feel they can sympathize with the grandmother of Dr. Howard Thurman. Dr. Thurman tells in a very understanding manner how, as a boy, he read the Bible to his grandmother who was not far removed from the bondage of slavery; she could neither read nor write. She loved her Bible and her face glowed as her grandson read the blessed Scripture to her. But when he came to Paul, and she heard, "Slaves, be obedient to your masters," she stopped him with severe command. They would skip that part . . . proceed beyond Paul! Women can understand that reasoning, because, taken in its literal translation, he also said, "Wives, be subject to your husbands in all things."

However, if one studies Paul with honesty, she knows that even though he gave some very definite instructions to the church at Corinth, he also used the service of women and appreciated their abilities. Dr. Clarence Tucker Craig writes:

"To Paul it seemed scandalous that women should cut their hair or attend worship without veils upon their heads. As we read his appeal to the order of nature to support 'taboos,' we see one of the best illustrations of the constant tendency of good people to identify the customs with which they are familiar with the Eternal Will of God."¹

This certainly is true of Paul. He was concerned, however, about the women of his day, wanting them to keep that inner reserve of true womanhood. Cer-

¹*The Beginning of Christianity*, by Clarence Tucker Craig, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. Used by permission.

tainly his ministry would have been greatly weakened without the women—Lydia, Priscilla, Lois, Dorcas, Phoebe!

When we think of women serving at the policy-making levels of the church, we are reminded of Paul's words: "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a *deaconess* of the church at Cenchreae, that you may receive her in the Lord as befits the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a helper of many and of myself as well."² *Diakonos*, translated *deaconess* here and *deacon* in other places, is one of those words found in both Greek and Latin that are used in both masculine and feminine gender without change of ending. It means "servant." Again Paul says: "Help these women, for they have labored *side by side with me* in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."³

It was Priscilla, who, with her husband, took a preacher named in the New Testament to one side and taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly.⁴

If, then, Jesus and Paul recognized the worth of women, not just as wives and mothers, but as important in the work of the Kingdom, why have some men been so reluctant to accept them and to allow them "full membership" in the church?

A brief glimpse at the struggle of women to serve their Lord without restrictions will show how difficult

²Rom. 16:1.

³Phil. 4:3.

⁴Acts 18:26.

has been the way. There are records in church history which disclose that there was debate over women's even singing in the church. However, this was at last grudgingly granted, and they began to plan and conduct programs within their own organizations.

B. B. Tyler writes in 1882:

"In the regular meetings of the society auxiliary to the Christian Women's Board of Missions, an item in the regular business program is the reading of either original papers or selected articles on mission work. It is for this reason that I said a moment ago that the ladies are furnishing, in the education of the people on this subject, an example that may well be imitated by the brethren. I rejoice over the women's mission work, not alone on this account, but also because it is a step in the direction of the recognition of woman's work as a co-worker in the gospel. Why should this portion of the church be, in practice, ignored? Has the church no more use for the female members than to aid in the singing? That is about all they have been permitted to do for a long time. *It was not so in the Apostolic Church.*"¹

Mrs. A. M. Harrison writes in 1904: "While this beginning of state work by the women was at the suggestion of the good men of our church, assembled in their state convention [1875] yet this first effort at organization was not without ridicule or criticism which seems inseparable from any departure of women from the old paths. . . .

¹*Christian Standard Supplement*, No. 41, 1882. From *Women's Missionary Work*—B. B. Tyler.

“... a minister took as his text, ‘A woman’s missionary society’ and threw cold water on women organizing for ‘general missionary work’ or for ‘preaching the gospel,’ and exhorts them rather to turn their attention to dress reform, and to caring for their own homes and children. He wrote with fine scorn: ‘Just imagine a procession of sisters, dressed in modern style, marching into Lexington to their yearly meeting, carrying banners inscribed “Woman’s Missionary Society” with the motto, “The poor have the gospel preached to them!”’ The argument that modern dress would prevent their laboring to have the gospel preached to the poor seemed shallow logic to the maligned society . . .”¹

Mrs. Harrison goes on to tell how one of the members “plucked up” spirit to defend their right to do missionary work, but a preacher-critic crushed her with a crisp remark and advised her that the best way to convince him and other doubting brethren of the necessity for such a movement is by what she can do, not by what she can say. Mrs. Harrison comments: “This would seem to come with ill grace from a ‘free-expressed brother’ who had been saying his say in two lengthy articles.” She continues, “Finally, a lover of peace put this paragraph in the missionary columns of the paper: ‘The Woman’s Missionary Movement seems to be considered in the light of a provocation to dialectics. It does not encourage much when one is doing all one can to be told that she must do more. Suppose we bid the sisters Godspeed in this work, and say nothing about how much more they might under-

¹President’s address, “Sketch of Kentucky Christian Board of Missions from Its Origin in 1882 to 1904.”

take in the way of dress reform, household and family duties, and such like.' ”

She concludes: “And these women not only had to endure the attacks that I have mentioned, but their scriptural right to undertake public organized work was questioned: ‘Let the women keep silent in the churches’ was thundered at them from many sources. And to the foes without were added the foes within; the greatest obstacle they had to contend with was self-distrust—many of them could literally apply the words of Paul to themselves, ‘That they labored in fear and weakness and in much trembling.’ There was not a woman in the society experienced in public work—they were untrained in speech, in the conduct of business, in audible, articulate prayer. The first time I ever heard a woman’s voice lifted in public prayer was in the early meetings of that organization.”

Mrs. Harrison later writes:

“In the assured and honored place that women’s work for Missions holds today, such criticism is provocative of amusement rather than anything else; and yet we would remember in seriousness and gratitude that often there was a lion in the path that our mothers in the faith had to tread, and to pay our tribute of honor to them for their faith and courage. And we should not fail to note that discipline is often the atmosphere in which strenuous souls strive. When Paul wrote to the church at Corinth of his desire to visit them, he said he could not leave Ephesus then, ‘Because a great and effectual door had been opened to him, and because there were many adversaries.’ I love to think that the

great Apostle remained at his post, not only because of the opened door, but because of the many adversaries.”¹

This writer likes to believe that women so struggle today, seeing always the open door ahead and not being discouraged by our many adversaries!

We are discovering that the church is losing many of its best trained and educated women because, while they can serve on policy-making levels in other organizations, in business and in the professions, the church still largely expects them to raise money for missions, serve dinners, and sell vanilla! It has not yet seen the need for women being a part of the total life of the church, using their minds as well as their hands. There are not many women who serve at policy-making levels of the church, and few are used to give major addresses on convention programs.

In a certain communion a committee met to plan the state convention program. It was decided that they should reach more lay people and have them attend the convention sessions in larger numbers. Plans were made to have “popular” evening meetings, by inviting great speakers and filling the auditorium for these occasions. Names were suggested that would draw the crowds. Hesitantly came the suggestion from the women that a woman might be used for one of the evening addresses. The men turned questioning but kindly eyes toward them. (One never knew what to expect from the women!) “Can you find one whose voice will carry in a large auditorium?”

¹Taken from *Forty Years of Service—A History of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions—1874-1914*.

They thought they could.

"Can you find one who is an excellent speaker? We will need our *best* for these evening programs."

The women thought they could. They suggested one.

"No," the men replied, very patiently, "she is a brilliant woman, but, well—unattractive! Could you find one as brilliant as she, but more attractive? You will need your best."

The women hesitated for a moment and then quickly insisted, "Yes, we think we can."

"Very well," the men conceded, "find one."

It was the privilege of the president of the women's organization to present the woman guest speaker to the convention. She has a bit of Irish in her blood, so she told of the rigid requirements set up for the woman speaker, and said, "We are pleased to report that we have found her, and it is my privilege to present her to the convention."

She then turned and faced some of her male friends on the platform behind her. A few were slightly bald and a bit heavier than they had been in college. She commented: "Some day we are going to demand those requirements for our men speakers," and then she stepped aside for the "attractive" speaker, who could be heard—and who had something to say!

It is often the men who are clearing the way for women to serve more fully in the church. Just recently, the following excellent statement was received. It is written by Dr. John W. Beardslee, Jr., of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, and he has granted

permission for it to be quoted. It is headed: *Women in the Offices of the Church.*

In part it says:

"The Faculty have asked me to prepare a statement in response to the General Synod's request for an opinion on the teaching of the New Testament with reference to the proposed elimination of the word 'male' from section 42 of the Constitution of our church. In the following statement our Faculty concur.

"I. Definite directions in regard to the composition of our Consistory or Classis cannot be found in the New Testament because the New Testament knows nothing of such bodies and cannot therefore prescribe their composition. Our Consistories and Classes are post-Reformation groups.

"II. The various directions of the New Testament about the conduct of the women of the Church are irrelevant to the present issue, not only for the reason stated above, but also because all such statements plainly refer to local and temporary conditions and have never been understood by our church to bind the Church through the ages. Indeed a literalistic interpretation often makes them inconsistent.

"For instance, in I Timothy 2:12 and I Corinthians 14:34 a woman must not speak in church, but in I Corinthians 11:5 and 13 it is plainly assumed that women pray and prophesy in the Corinthian Church, and the custom is not criticized. There are few Reformed churches in which a woman has not been invited to speak from the pulpit.

"I Corinthians 11 insists that women must be veiled in the church. Note that Paul is not speaking of hats, of which he knew nothing. Even with the customary but unwarranted substitution of 'hats' for 'veil,' women do appear bareheaded in our churches. For a woman of Corinth to appear in public unveiled would be tantamount to announcing herself a woman of the street.

"I Corinthians 11:6 states that it is shameful for a woman to have her hair cut. Does any church today consider this a permanent prohibition?

"III. The statement that the New Testament knows nothing of women in the offices of the church is an error. In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called 'deacon of the church in Cenchreae.' In the discussion of the qualifications of a deacon in I Timothy 3:8-13, verse 11 plainly includes women, stating their qualifications for the office. The widows of I Timothy 5:3-16 are plainly officers of the Church, although their precise function is obscure.

"IV. One of the glorious characteristics of our New Testament is its placing of the sexes on an equality before God and in the Church. It is difficult for us to realize what an innovation that was in the first century world, Jewish or pagan. We cannot understand why, if in Christ there is neither male nor female, the inspiration of Christ's Spirit in matters of church management should be supposed to be limited to males."

An editorial in the *Christian Century* under date of April 8, 1953, states:

"Church Women Ask Where They Stand

"Is it true that American churches are more nearly emancipated in the status they give women than are

the churches of Europe and other outposts? We complacently assume they are, but United Church Women intend to examine this assumption. This general department of the National Council of Churches has received the approval of the General Board to interrogate member denominations of the council concerning their practices and their reasons for their practices. (It is reported that one supposedly emancipated board of a denomination that likes to think it sets an example has answered part of the inquiry by stating that no women can serve on this board because it meets in a place where women are not welcome. Well!!) A committee of theologians and other learned persons has been set up to evaluate the findings of the inquiry. The women and men who constitute this committee plan to complete their work this summer. The statement they issue on the actual status of women in the National Council denominations should be worth reading. We hope the committee will study service as well as status. It should even be possible for it to study status in the light of the opportunities for service the denominations make available to churchwomen. A good place to start might be with John Foster's excellent little book *After the Apostles* (S.C.M. Press, London). He suggests that the real apostolic succession was not that of the rulers of the church, but of the witnesses to the truth of the gospel. By this measure of status, women ranked high. 'No one can read the Acts and the Epistles with any care and not find women so prominent as to be startling,' he says. 'In almost every city and town (between Jerusalem and Rome) women are foremost in the nucleus of first-believers, sometimes the

only ones who cared.' He quotes Libanius of the 4th century—"the last great name in the list of pagan philosophers"—as exclaiming one day: 'Heavens! What women you Christians have!' If the present study includes the service women render the churches, Libanius' exclamation will be heard again."¹

There is no doubt but that the findings of the committee on the status of women in American churches presented at the assembly of the United Church Women at Atlantic City, will "stir the waters" again—and surely lead to a rethinking of the American churches regarding the status of their women members. What happens in the future will be determined not alone by the male members of the church but by what the women themselves decide to do.

Many women will continue to be happy at the level of their service to the church in the past, but others will push on in eagerness to acquire greater knowledge and to gain the privilege of being used more fully. It is interesting to read that in her president's address in 1910, Mrs. John Gay prodded the women, as follows:

"... It seems a great menace threatens Kentucky women in allowing domestic demands that are made on every housekeeper, on every homemaker, to monopolize our time. I do not advocate the neglect of a single duty that will make the atmosphere of home more wholesome, the appearance of the house more inviting; but is it not time for us to know it is a *home duty*, a command of God, that we neglect not our minds, one of the richest gifts He has bestowed? May we not combine the service of Martha with the ministry of

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Mary? It may mean sacrifice, hard work and good management for some women to claim one hour each day for study and meditation on God's purposes and ways, but a mother once said: 'You will find nothing in life worth having unless it requires work.'"¹

This message strikes a sympathetic note in the hearts of many women in 1953. It must be noted that great progress is being made. Miss Helen Kenyon has capably served as moderator for the Congregational Christian Churches. Three women—Mrs. Leslie B. Swain, Mrs. H. G. Colwell, Mrs. Helen B. Montgomery—have served with distinction as presidents of the American Baptist Convention. In 1952, for the first time in their history, a woman was named by the Disciples of Christ as *First Vice-President* of their International Convention. It is said that there was some discussion by the nominating committee as to whether they might name a woman as president, but it was felt that they would be wise to experiment with a woman as *first* vice-president (testing that innovation) before venturing to put the gavel of the convention in the hands of a woman. Because of the illness of the president, the first vice-president was required, on a month's notice, to prepare the president's address for the opening night of the convention (which had to be in manuscript form for printing) and to preside over the business sessions of the convention. Her prayer was, "Heavenly Father, help me serve worthily. If I can do it, perhaps the convention will allow another

¹Portions of President's Address, Kentucky Christian Women's Board of Missions, 28th Annual Convention, Owensboro, September 19-20, 1910.

woman to be elected president some day because she can serve her church with honor in this responsible position."

The women of the Presbyterian Church in the United States report through their executive, Miss Janie McGaughey:

"The 'Women of the Church' organization of our church was begun in the year 1912. In 1913, the first report of the women's work (the organization then being called the Woman's Auxiliary) was given to the General Assembly by a male member of the Assembly (not by the Superintendent, who was Mrs. W. C. Winsborough). That was the case each year until 1925 at which time Mrs. Winsborough herself presented the report of women's work on the floor of the General Assembly. In 1926, she was given the permission to present the report again but due to some objection on the part of the brethren of the Assembly, she requested that the report be given by Dr. Henry Sweets. In that same General Assembly there was a resolution adopted by the Assembly to the effect that the Superintendent of the Woman's Auxiliary, as that office was then called, had 'a right to read her report.' Therefore, since the year 1927 the report of women's work of our church has been presented by the Secretary of Women's Work. Mrs. Winsborough, predecessor of the present Secretary, gave her report in person only three years, 1925, 1927, and 1928. Since 1929, I have given the report, without any question, each year until 1950; beginning that year there was a change in the presentation of all reports to the Assembly and rather than having the reports presented

to the General Assembly, they are reported directly to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly; this is true of every Board Secretary in our Assembly.

“However, one very interesting fact, in addition to the above, is that since 1950 the Board of Women’s Work has been given a time on the Assembly docket (ten or fifteen minutes) for some presentation of women’s work. This year, at the General Assembly, in June, 1953, the Board of Women’s Work was assigned a *45-minute period on an evening program*; that really was history!”

From the page “News of the Church World” *The Christian-Evangelist* carried the information that in September, 1952, the House of Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal church ruled for the third time against giving women the right to vote on church legislation. It quoted: “The right of Episcopal women to vote also was a controversial issue at the church’s last two general convention sessions. At Boston in 1946 one woman deputy, or delegate, was legally seated. But three years later, in San Francisco, all of the four women deputies sent by their dioceses were barred from voting.”

It is interesting to note that some of the most brilliant leadership in the Ecumenical Movement comes from the Protestant Episcopal women as well as from its men! The pioneer trail blazer in making the United Council of Church Women known across the nation was an Episcopalian, Mrs. Harper Sibley, a past president of the organization. She is today a dramatic figure in the religious world and when she “retired” from her active work as president, she im-

mediately went on into other national and world enterprises. She has insisted through the years that "only equals can cooperate" and that women must have equal status with men.

It is encouraging to find that in many local churches women now serve on the official boards, and ministers having tested the idea declare, "It is good." The minister of a large university church has insisted for many years that women be elected to the official board of his church. Their position on the Board does not relegate them to washing communion cups and other such services, but to being full, participating members of this governing body.

During the three-year interval since the National Council of Churches was organized, the General Department of United Church Women has been struggling, as an administrative and policy-making organization, to find its "place" within the Council. Its staff serves not only the Department but in a cooperative relationship the other units of the Council. Its general director serves on the National Council's cabinet, and its president on its General Board.

During the three years of its history, the Department has been working out plans for a firm financial foundation and administrative procedures and policies that will stand the test which could be given to any respected religious body. It has been said that this achievement to date is due in part to the exceptional administrative ability of its General Director, Mrs. W. Murdoch MacLeod, and that is correct. We know, however, that church women across the nation today,

both dedicated and trained, are not being used by the churches to the limit of their ability at policy-making levels.

A. McLean in his book *Missionary Addresses* states:

"In Persia among the Nestorians, it is deemed immodest for women to know how to read. Some women in that land were asked, 'Who was the first man?' They replied: 'What do we know? We are only women!'"¹

The modern woman can answer that question. She knows! She also knows that this first man was given a companion and that she was created because God knew He needed both of them in His world. The women can read, they can understand, and so they are aware that, whatever the method of temptation, *both man and woman ate the forbidden fruit*. They now struggle together to rise above their first great sin and to use the knowledge of good and evil as they build a better world in which children and young people may grow to full maturity. Why not work "as equals"? Why not, to the fullest extent, work *together*?

¹Christian Publishing Company.

The Church Woman and Ordination

It has always been the nature of woman to ponder the deep things of religion in her heart. She has been a vital factor in the rise of Christianity. The time has come for the church to recognize and utilize her religious devotion by ordaining her to the full Christian ministry.

Dean Seth W. Slaughter
Disciples of Christ
Columbia, Missouri

CHAPTER III

The Church Woman and Ordination

THE WRITER REALIZES THAT she is attempting to deal with a very highly controversial subject. She does it after years of concern in this whole area, and after hours of prayer. She knows this is not a question of men versus women, because it has often been women who have restricted other women as they struggled to serve the church in its full ministry.

An incident is recalled where a woman executive had a sobering experience. Her organization had been working for the issue of "equal pay for equal work." The question of salary increase for this executive was raised in the personnel committee and it was another woman executive, not the men on the committee, who questioned it. The point stressed by the woman was that there were other women executives working for less, so this executive should not receive more (even though she deserved the raise and her organization was willing to give the increase). She did not realize that if the woman in a top position could be granted this recognition, it would pave the way for the other women executives, doing equal work with men executives, to receive a fairer salary adjustment. A woman president of a certain women's organization was also surprised when she went to a male executive wanting salary increases for the executive staff of her organization to

be told that it was other *women* executives who were resisting in this case.

She wants to make clear her personal position on this subject of ordination. She is not launching an attack on the men of the church. She simply raises an issue about which the church should have grave concern, and in which women have a vital interest. She knows so well how "we women" react! Let one of us, or even a man, criticize men—and we rush like the crusaders of old to their defense! It is about time we realize that men can jolly well defend themselves and give some thought and attention to our own development.

Miss Genevieve Brown reports in the June, 1952, issue of the religious journal, *World Call*:¹

"That this matter of the status of women in the church is not merely a feminine concern was clearly evidenced in a meeting held in New York in March, 1952, under the sponsorship of the American members of the World Council of Churches Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church. At that time Dr. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, stated:

"'The World Council is vitally concerned over the role of women in the church. Without the full contribution of its women members the church is not really whole. . . . The question of women's place in the church is a challenge which the church must face today, and it must not fall back on the old, outmoded, traditional answer which it has given in the past.'

"Dr. Visser 't Hooft called attention to the progress made by women in some of the younger churches dis-

¹From *World Call*. Used by permission.

covering their true place in the church. He cited Indonesia, where women until recently had a very inferior position, but where they are now accepted in a way that goes beyond most Western churches.

“‘The question,’ continued Dr. Visser ’t Hooft, ‘is much more than one of opportunity for women to take their just and rightful place in the church. It is concerned with the economy of spiritual gifts as developed in the 12th chapter of First Corinthians. Diversity of gifts is good and willed by God, all gifts playing together to form a divine harmony. To this harmony both men and women must learn to contribute their full share and range of talents.’ He admitted that, ‘For the most part we have not yet got the idea across to the men of the church. Neither have theologians taken the matter as seriously as they should.’ He urged that on the basis of Biblical theology, and without necessarily waiting for the professional theologians, the question be pressed ‘to the very heart of the church.’”

There is an excellent little book by R. W. Howard entitled *Should Women Be Priests?*¹ which all church members, both men and women, should read. It is the compilation of three sermons preached by him before the University of Oxford.

The Foreword is written by Canon L. Hodgson, D.D., Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. In it, he states:

“Unfortunately the subject is so charged with emotional dynamite that dispassionate discussion is difficult

¹*Should Women Be Priests?* by R. W. Howard, Basil Blackwell, Publishers, Oxford, England. Used by permission.

to secure. I must confess that the coward in me, which shrinks from strife, would be glad if all mention of it could be avoided till after I am gone. But Canon Howard has learned St. Timothy's lesson: He has put aside fear and faced the issue with power and love and a sound mind. He challenges us to do the same, and the challenge must be met."

In the Preface to his book, Canon Howard states:

"Let me explain that I am no ardent feminist. Indeed, I have to confess, not without shame, that in the times of my ignorance (I can only hope that God winked at them) I twice voted as a younger Cambridge M.A. against the admission of women to degrees in my own university.

"My repentance came about thus. In 1946, I was honored by an invitation to preach the annual sermon of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. Choosing as my theme the emancipation of women through Christianity, I was horrified to discover during my study of the subject the mountainous barricades of obscurantism and prejudice, chiefly masculine, but partly feminine, over which the pioneers of that emancipation had been forced to climb while winning for women those positions of liberty and of equal privilege with men which nobody questions today."

If such leaders in the Church of England are concerned, surely leaders in the free churches of the United States should be also.

From across the ocean comes another interesting comment. It is written by Dr. A. Maude Royden, an eminent preacher, who I am told is one of the three

women in England holding the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. Dr. Royden has written an excellent review of the book by Dr. Kathleen Bliss, *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches*, and has given permission to quote from it. She says:

“What is it all about? I am tempted to say that it is the history of a long-drawn-out attempt on the part of the ecclesiastics to evade an issue which, it becomes increasingly clear, cannot be evaded forever. The result of this unwillingness shows in the curiously illogical and surprising differences in the status of women in the churches in different countries and even in the same country. Surprising, because the reader will learn that most progress has been made in the most backward countries. Dr. Bliss speaks of the ‘promising development of women’s work’ in Argentina and Uruguay and in Manchuria. Before the country was occupied by the Japanese, women were admitted on equal terms with men for theological education and were allowed also to take a special course qualifying them to work as Church Sisters.

“On the other hand, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark do not report the existence of trained parish workers of any kind, except the deaconesses. The Swedish report definitely says that there are very few paid posts for women in the church, those that exist being in a few youth organizations and traveling missionary secretaries. Norway reports one woman worker recently sent to work among industrial workers. Again on page 108 the Swedish report is quoted as saying that ‘women missionaries are the only women—besides the deaconesses—who are allowed consecration

for the office by the church, but still, though completely accepted in the mission field there is strong opposition to the idea of women at home preaching or speaking in the churches.' ”

Dr. Royden continues:

“In our own country [England] the same inconsistencies exist. I myself have been invited to preach in Free Churches. Yet women are rarely called to take charge of a church. In the Church of England I have myself been allowed to preach in churches so long as I was not said to ‘preach’ but to ‘give an address.’ Only a priest or deacon can preach; not a layman or woman. Did John the Baptist then give addresses on the banks of the Jordan? What nonsense is this?”

Dr. Royden insists that there seems to be a doubt as to whether women are persons!

She continues:

“I am reminded of a legend which tells how St. Bernard, who had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin, was kneeling before her image in prayer when she opened her lips to speak to her devotee. ‘Silence!’ he cried. ‘It is not permitted to a woman to speak in church.’ . . .

“Dr. Bliss records the constant preoccupation of the churches with the vexed question. Conference after conference, commission after commission, issues questionnaires and publishes reports. Resolutions are moved, votes recorded, concessions made grudgingly or refused altogether. Why is this? Is any progress made? Very little, on the whole. Yet the subject refuses to lie dormant. I believe the reason is that

neither men nor women have completely accepted the fact (it is a fact) that women are persons and as fully human beings as men. They must be equally intelligent, equally brave, equally capable, but it is man who is the human being and woman is a variety. Since this is believed to be so, they may be 'allowed' certain opportunities, 'admitted' to certain privileges: they are not accepted as having rights. This refusal makes the question of their status in the churches a matter of expediency, not of principle. For example, their ordination to the ministry of religion is refused by some because it might lessen the possibility of reunion with other churches. Both Methodism in this country [England] and the Church of Sweden regard themselves as links between the Church of England and other communions, while the Church of England thinks itself a link with Roman Catholicism. It is firmly and ridiculously believed that Christian churches can unite on the basis of an error held in common. It is as easy to hold together with ropes of sand."

Many church women in the United States echo these statements from this brilliant English church woman with "Amen! Amen!"

And now for a look at "Church Women in the Scheme of Things" in the United States of America!

* * * * *

"I do not believe that women should be ministers," said an attractive young woman lawyer one day to her friend, an ordained woman minister. "It is *scriptural* that women should be silent in the church."

"But are they silent?" asked the woman minister. "Social custom has changed since New Testament times. Today women are trained and educated even as men and are entering all of the professions. If Jesus were to return today might He not use women to the limit of their ability? He did, you know, in the day in which He lived. And might not a woman be as effective a minister as a lawyer? Would she not be as good as a male minister in the realm of counseling, in pastoral calling, in performing wedding ceremonies, in the ministry to children and young people in community services and, certainly, in the area of Christian family life which has become of such concern to the church?"

We think of Dr. A. Maude Royden as pre-eminently a preacher, and Dr. Georgia Harkness as one of the world's recognized theologians. In New England today, there are several women pastors, ordained under the influence of that noted rural minister of New England, Dr. Hilda Ives. The story of Hilda Ives would make an interesting novel. Coming from a prominent family in Maine, she married an attorney, and became the mother of four children. After World War I, Mrs. Ives's husband died and she was left alone to rear her children. Today one of her sons is a minister; the other is a doctor; the daughters are married.

Seeing the need of the rural churches of New England, she dedicated her life to that work. Equipped with the recognition of her denomination as an ordained minister, she has driven thousands of miles across New England—preaching, serving, "stirring up the people," and reviving rural churches. She has been the guiding light of the New England Town and Country Com-

mission for years, and many people, both men and women, are serving more effectively in the rural church field today because of her influence. She was on the staff of Andover-Newton Theological Seminary for several years and then "retired" to go to Europe in reconstruction work under the Friends Service Committee! She is now doing "free-lance" speaking in the United States and is an inspiration to all who hear her.

Dr. Georgia Harkness, of the Pacific School of Religion, states her position on the ordination of women:

"I believe that qualified women who feel called to preach the gospel should be ordained because there is no place for sex discrimination within Christ's Church. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

"This would be true as a matter of Christian principle, even if no question of expediency were involved. Yet in the present situation there are important practical reasons why women should receive ordination. In many areas churches are understaffed or served by men of slight educational equipment, and not a few are closed for lack of an available minister. At the same time, women of great devotion and ability with adequate theological preparation are in general debarred because of their sex.

"No other major profession is so extensively closed to women. Yet those women who have been permitted to serve as pastors and preachers have proved that they can do it well. While ordination alone would not eliminate the present barriers of social conservatism, it would challenge these barriers and would open the

way to a fuller use of the talents of both men and women in the service of Christ.”¹

Apparently there are many others who believe, as did the woman lawyer, that a woman should not have the privilege of ordination. Certainly this was true in the past. In *The Apostolic Guide* there is recorded an address by A. P. Terrell, “Should Women Speak in Public?” July 2, 1886. Following are a few of his statements:

“From my earliest boyhood, I have had a very exalted opinion of woman, and I do hope and pray that she will be guilty of no improprieties in the future which will change that opinion. There has always appeared to be about her a sweetness and delicacy of soul which seemed to lift her far above man in the roughness and coarseness of his nature. . . . For this reason and for Bible reasons I abominate the whole modern heresy of ‘woman’s rights’ and everything which squints that way. A female politician makes my flesh crawl. Woman’s suffrage is nauseating. Even to think of woman in the pulpit or on the lecture rostrum is disagreeable to me, for woman’s sake and for God’s sake. In the same line of sentiment, I disapprove of a woman conducting prayer meetings or leading in prayer when there are mixed audiences.

“. . . I never heard but two women lecture, and I trust it will never be my displeasure to hear another. The whole thing is disgusting to me, whether the lecture be delivered in behalf of temperance, politics, or religion.

¹Personal letter to the author.

“With these preliminary remarks, I wish to give some reasons why women should not speak in public assemblies.

“1. She is not physically able to endure the hardships which are consequent upon such a life.

“. . . For a delicate, refined woman to do the work of one of our politicians or preachers would be a physical impossibility. . . . That there are women brave enough, and energetic enough, to try to do the work of men, I do not for a moment doubt. But that they are able to undergo the trials, the hardships, and difficulties of man, I can't believe. . . . Further, they must be out in all sorts of weather, and speak from once to twice a day. For women to attempt to do the work of these servants of man and God would result in her death.

“. . . But whenever you find a woman who can endure the hardships of man, you may set it down that she is a poor excuse of a woman.

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“2. Woman's voice is not adapted to public speaking.

“Had God intended her as a public speaker, He would have given her a stronger voice. Woman is a very good conversationalist, but when she gets on a high key in a public address, she begins to squeal and her voice grates harshly on the ear. The voice of woman is well adapted to talking baby-talk, soothing and comforting man in his hours of sorrow and trouble, and singing the Lord's songs; but for public speaking, everyone knows it is a failure.

“3. *Woman's dress unfits her for public speaking.*

“In the first place, her clothing is too tight, or binds her too much. Her waist, chest and throat are generally bound as tightly as she can get them. To speak well, these parts must be free, unfettered, unbound. . . . Their already weak voices are made weaker by screwing themselves up in vises. If a girl has a tolerably respectable voice when she is young, it will be choked to death before she is grown. . . . The question is not ‘who ought to preach’ but it is, ‘who can preach?’ Women, I claim, cannot preach. In the second place, their clothing is too heavy, too burdensome. . . . ’Tis much easier to sit under a fine shade tree, dressed in an elegant ‘Mother Hubbard’ with a nice pitcher of cool ice water sitting by, to write about woman doing the work of men than it is to do the work. . . . There is nothing adds so much to a woman’s health as a quiet home life where she can dress as she pleases. Too much and too tight clothing have resulted in the death of many a woman.

“... The women who exert almost a divine influence over all around them are those sweet, chaste, modest, refined, unassuming creatures who do not appear to be trying to influence anyone.

“... I will admit all the rights that such a woman claims—all that I myself possess—if she will let me alone, and keep her distance from me.”

These statements were made in 1886, but one occasionally hears echoes in 1953! We may be justified in saying that all women do not have voices for public speaking and many cannot be heard in a large audi-

torium (though loud-speakers have certainly helped at this point). However, neither do *all* women desire to be ministers. The fact is that the "ministry" is not to be equated with "preaching ministry." A person does not have to be a preacher to be a Christian minister. Some ministers are preachers, but not all ministers are preachers; or, all preachers are ministers, but not all ministers are preachers.

A woman can be a minister and not be a preacher; many men are content with this status. However, if a woman desires to *preach*, if her training and skill meet the required standard of her denomination, is it Christian to deny her this privilege? An educator recently stated, "If a woman's voice will not reach to the back row in a church, she is not being discriminated against if she is not allowed to preach. If her voice is high and squeaky, she can minister in another field, just as a man with a high and squeaky voice." As one recalls the voices to which she has listened through the years, she believes that not all persons with such voices *have* gone into "another field."

We could list the names of the denominations in the United States which do not grant ordination to women and we could give the usual answers (some of the answers being what one noted religious journal calls "bearded"). But this is a book of hope and expectancy! It will not mention all "the lions in the path" nor the "adversaries." It will tell with sincere appreciation of some of the opened doors!

Four seminaries in the United States were asked by the writer to state why they accept women as candidates for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. The reply

from Dr. Riley B. Montgomery, President of The College of the Bible, Lexington, Kentucky, is quoted in Chapter I.

Following is a statement from Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, President of Union Theological Seminary, New York, dated June 18, 1953:

"You asked me for a brief statement as to why Union Theological Seminary accepts women in candidacy for the B.D. degree. Union Seminary is an institution dedicated to preparing leadership for all Protestant denominations. Women have a very important part in that leadership, not only in those denominations which accept women for ordination to the Christian ministry, but also as church workers, directors of religious education, teachers of religion in colleges and schools, missionaries both home and foreign, etc. We consider it an important part of the Seminary's task to help prepare these women for their life's work. Furthermore, we consider the program of study leading to the B.D. degree to be the best possible course of preparation for anyone, man or woman, who is looking forward to full-time service in the churches. In consequence, of course we accept women as candidates for the B.D. degree; indeed, we urge them to take this program in preference to any one of the half dozen other programs for various master's and doctor's degrees which are offered by Union Seminary or by Columbia University in collaboration with Union Seminary. For half a century, we have had a certain number of women in this course. *Not a few of them are today distinguished leaders in the work of the church here and abroad*, and in a variety of church vocations.

In recent years, the number of these women who are working for the B.D. degree has increased; in the past academic year 164 women were so registered."

F. W. Schroeder, president of Eden Theological Seminary, states:

"For a good many years now the theological seminaries of our church [Evangelical and Reformed] have been open to women on the same condition applying to men; namely, four years of college are required in order to be admitted. At Eden Seminary, for example, women may either take the two-year course leading to the Master of Arts degree in Christian Education or Church Social Work, or the three-year course leading to the Bachelor of Divinity degree. Those who complete the regular B.D. course qualify for ordination.

"Having said that, I should add at once that I know of six young women who have taken the regular three-year course and have been ordained by our church; four of these happen to be graduates of Eden. Moreover, it is noteworthy that, to the best of my knowledge, the question was not even raised whether women could be ordained when the first of these sought ordination. It is assumed as a matter of fact that any person called of God and meeting the educational standards of the denomination—whether male or female—is eligible for ordination."

Dr. Liston Pope, Dean of Yale University Divinity School, writes under date of July 2, 1953:

"For more than twenty years the Yale Divinity School has admitted women to its various courses of

study on exactly the same terms as men. Because of limited dormitory accommodations for them, the number of women is strictly limited, but there is no other artificial limitation on their enrollment. We use precisely the same standards for their admission, instruction, and graduation as obtain for male students. We have encountered some special problems in connection with the enrollment of women, but they have been only such as were to be expected.

“The Yale Divinity School has never officially taken a position with respect to the ordination of women, as our faculty does not pass resolutions on such matters. I am certain that a poll of the faculty would reveal a unanimous answer favoring ordination, so far as I have had opportunity to hear informal discussion on the question. A great many of our women graduates have been ordained and have done very well in the parish ministry, as well as in religious education and in other fields.”

Is it small wonder that many church women in the United States feel encouraged rather than discouraged regarding their status in the church?

Four denominational leaders were asked about their particular denomination and its position regarding the ordination of women:

Bishop Fred Pierce Corson of The Methodist Church sends this statement:

“Under the law of The Methodist Church, women may not become ministerial members of an Annual Conference. However, if they complete the course of study prescribed and meet the other requirements, they

may be ordained as local deacons and elders having the right to administer the Holy Sacraments and serving as supply ministers in our churches.”

Dr. Douglas Horton, Minister of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches of the United States of America, writes:

“In an offhand response to your question as to the Congregational Christian belief that the Church has a right to ordain women, let me give you three answers from three different fields.

“1. Theologically, since women are persons to whom the entire grace of God has been made available, the burden of proof in this matter would seem to be upon those branches of the Christian Church which prohibit the ordination of women.

“2. Practically, there are some types of ministry for which ordination is essential and in which ordained women can perform a better service than ordained men.

“3. Biblically, if God selected a woman to be the mother of Christ, I do not see why He cannot use other women to minister to the Body of Christ.”

Dr. Gaines M. Cook, Executive Secretary of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ, writes:

“This is the paragraph on why I believe the Disciples of Christ ordain women: The same Paul who admonished women to be silent in the church also said that ‘there is neither male nor female, bond nor free, Jew nor Greek.’ He accepted a Christian status of ‘no sex,’ but he evidently followed a custom which prevailed at the time regarding the place of women in assemblies, but which custom has happily been out-

grown. We must distinguish between the transitory and the permanent in Paul as in other matters in the New Testament. The proper answer on who gave the Disciples the authority to allow women to administer communion, baptism and marriage, is that we have the same authority which permitted men to do these things, viz., the New Testament itself which makes no discrimination aside from the transitory statement of Paul. I actually cannot speak for the Brotherhood, but I believe that these are typical answers just as we follow the Protestant doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, which actually makes no distinction between the clergy and the laymen either."

Dr. Reuben E. Nelson, General Secretary for the American Baptist Convention, writes:

"Why Baptists Ordain Women"

"While Baptists do not have a large percentage of women who are ordained, the practice is common enough to raise the question as to why the practice is sanctioned.

"1. Baptists have always insisted that ordination is the function of the local church. The local church ordains by calling messengers from Baptist churches in the area, thereby recognizing the fact that more than the local church is concerned. Nevertheless, it is the local church that votes first of all to call the Council. If a woman member of the church gives evidence of being 'called' to the ministry, is of excellent Christian character and reputation, exhibits such gifts as make her capable in preaching and pastoral work, she is ordained on the same basis as a man. (One

should add, of course, that there is an increasing emphasis among us for a more adequate educational preparation for ministerial candidates.)

"The theological basis of the policy as indicated above lies in the Baptist principle of accepting 'the New Testament as our only rule of faith and practice.' When this principle is followed in terms of historical and New Testament purity, Baptists have deep respect for one another's viewpoints. Hence, there has been no action on a 'denominational' basis as to ordination. Where it has been done, that is, where women have been ordained, it has been considered within the right of local churches so to do, and has been accepted as the guidance by the Holy Spirit of people earnestly seeking to follow the New Testament under God's interpretation.

"2. Women have served through more than a century of missionary history. Most women missionaries are 'commissioned' rather than ordained, but it should be noted that many of our men missionaries are also commissioned rather than ordained, for instance, medical, educational, agricultural, etc. Yet in practice, no essential distinction is ever made between the 'commissioned' and the ordained missionary.

"It should be noted, too, that many who become missionaries are already ordained as pastors, and even ordained people are 'commissioned' as missionaries.

"3. Women among us have 'proved' themselves as capable of carrying responsibility. For instance, *the fact that three of our greatest presidents have been women, has drawn attention to the capability of consecrated womanhood.*"

When some of these encouraging statements are read, one is almost tempted to prophesy that if those few women (comparatively speaking)—who wish ordination, and who have the ability, determination, and the training—decide to become ministers of local churches, it *could* happen here!

We must not get the idea that this is an innovation in the United States and that our generation is the first to attempt it. I recommend the book by Laura Kerr—*Lady in the Pulpit*.¹ This is the story of the first ordained woman in the United States. In the Foreword the author states:

“Antoinette Brown was more feminine than feminist, yet she was the first ordained woman minister in the United States. Sister-in-law of Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman doctor, and of Lucy Stone, prominent suffragette leader, she was destined to play a leading role on that great stage in American history which witnessed a genuine revival of liberal thought. She was the close friend of William Lloyd Garrison, Susan B. Anthony, Henry Ward Beecher, Wendell Phillips, and Horace Greeley—all, famous personages of her day.

“Antoinette Brown Blackwell was an extraordinary woman. Graduating from the Ladies’ Literary Course at Oberlin College in 1847, she entered the theological school, only to be denied ordination because she was a woman. However, after her college’s admonition to ‘preach or be silent as her heart dictated,’ she delivered sermons all over the country, in country churches and

¹*Lady in the Pulpit*, Laura Kerr, Copyright, Whiteside, Inc., New York. Used by permission.

city auditoriums alike with great success. In 1853, she was ordained minister of the Congregational Church of South Butler, New York.

"Just before the Civil War, she married a well-to-do hardware merchant, Samuel Blackwell. There were six daughters born to the marriage; yet, in spite of her devotion to her family, she continued to work for woman's rights and abolition, and to preach. She also wrote ten books, the last of which she completed at the age of ninety-three.

"At the age of 78 she visited the Holy Land and brought back holy water from the River Jordan with which to christen her grandchildren. Two years later she made a journey to Alaska; and on Easter Sunday at the age of ninety, she preached her last sermon, in the brown frame Unitarian church in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where she had been minister for fifteen years.

"When Oberlin College sent for her in 1908 to receive her Doctor of Divinity degree, she was completely happy.

"She lived to be ninety-six years old, casting her vote for President of the United States along with the other women of the country in behalf of whom she had fought so valiantly for this privilege."

Certainly all Congregational Christian women will take just pride in Antoinette Brown.

The material in this chapter has been compiled because the writer believes it has significance for the church today. She would like to say, in closing, that she presents it not as a "frustrated female" demanding certain rights in the church, but because she believes that, as the current President of the United Church

Women of America, she has a responsibility to lift this area of concern. She believes also that women of the congregationally controlled churches have a special responsibility because they have been granted so many privileges.

In fairness to her own communion which has accorded her great privilege, she makes the following statement:

She is an ordained minister and is, therefore, not struggling for the privilege of ordination. She has served with her husband as pastor in a local church, performing the rites of marriage and burial, administering communion and preaching from the pulpit. She was accepted by her husband as co-pastor and, though they differ in many ways and their ideas are often in conflict, he not only "accepted" her but has urged her on when she herself would many times have turned back.

She received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky (the first institution of higher learning west of the Allegheny Mountains).

She was an official representative from her communion to the first assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1948, and has been named as a delegate from the Disciples of Christ to the World Council of Churches Assembly to be held in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954.

She writes this only to say that she has not had to push her way nor demand her *rights*. She has served to the best of her ability in whatever place her church

has chosen to use her, as other women in her communion have served.

There has not been a man who has ever made her feel "out of place" as she has served at various levels of church responsibility. They have worked with her "as an equal," never assuming a superior attitude.

Therefore, without one "chip on her shoulder" she prayerfully lifts the question of ordination. She asks that it be reconsidered by the whole church. More than anything else she asks that church women themselves think carefully before they oppose the ordination of women who believe they are called to become ministers of the gospel, and who desire to serve the church to the limit of their abilities.

The Church Woman and Her Nation

Women have a special obligation to meet the need of the nation. The nation acknowledged its need a generation ago when it gave women the right to vote. But they have been so slow to assume the burdens of first-class citizenship that it was not until 1952 that the vote of women became a recognizable factor. At that rate, it will take another generation before women grow into fully participating citizenship. That much time is not available. On the great issues of the character and even the survival of our nation, time is running out. It should be the function of Christian women to awaken, to alert to informed and functioning civic responsibility, the women of the nation.

Dr. Harold E. Fey, Executive Editor
The Christian Century.

CHAPTER IV

The Church Woman and Her Nation

AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN from another country remarked as she sat with an American woman at lunch, "The women of the world are restless. They are struggling to be persons. In some countries where they have had little privilege they now have a real share in government, as in India for instance. But in your great country, the United States, where women have had many privileges and opportunities, they actually have done little, comparatively speaking, in the field of government. You have your clubs, you aroused many women to get to the polls to vote in 1952, but you have few well-known women exerting noticeable influence. Perhaps yours are as the women in my country. They are happy with their husbands and their Canasta! Why bother with government?" The American woman meditated. How could she answer such a query? There are a few women well known in American political life: Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, Margaret Chase Smith, Frances P. Bolton, Judge Florence E. Allen. More could be named, but looking at the size of our country and its population, if we are honest we must

answer that women in the United States are not yet an appreciable influence in the leadership of our national life. Women have a responsibility to assume leadership in government now that we are voting citizens of a great democracy. Shall we continue to say, "We must not *lower ourselves* by getting mixed up in politics—that's man's responsibility"? Or shall we decide that we will do more than go to the polls and vote? We will become informed voters and be willing to assume civic responsibilities.

We are living in a world of tension and turmoil, caught in the midst of world revolution. Old "certainties" are being questioned and what was accepted as truth must now be tested and often re-thought. "Change" seems to be the only permanent thing in the world. We must face the fact that we will continue to live in a world of tensions as our children will after us. There will not be again in our generation what was thought of as "normal times." Ministers keep assuring us that we cannot meet hysteria with hysteria of our own.

Tension, uneasiness, and insecurity seem to be steadily mounting in a land where free men have walked with heads erect, unafraid; and where, while there were internal problems, the path of progress led steadily upward.

The rise of the Negro race to full citizenship has not been easy, but they are well on their way. In no other country in the world has a race made such strides so rapidly. They are lifting themselves to the place where equal opportunity is being achieved.

In like manner, women are also lifting themselves to their legitimate place "in the scheme of things." Only a short time ago, comparatively speaking, women had no property rights, no political rights. They had no economic opportunities and could not earn a living outside the home except as maids and seamstresses. They were not supposed to be "educated." They could study music and art to add to their "womanly charms" but to train their minds—never! They were told that "a woman's place is in the home." That is granted, but an interpretation of this statement should be briefly given. It is evident that "woman's place in the home" today has a different connotation from that of her place in the rugged pioneer days of our country, *though her basic responsibility remains unchanged.* In the past, she was "the maker of all things"—the clothes for her family, and its bread—and all work had to be done the hard way. She had no choice but to be there.

She had no choice but to be there—period! If her husband was unfaithful, if life became unbearable, still she stayed. She was in her "place" because there was no other place to go. There were no professions open to her, and she had no way to earn her living outside the home. She could return to her father's house, or become dependent on some male relative. She could, or she could not perhaps, but in any case she stayed in the home. Today with all the electrical and mechanical aids in their housework, women have free time which they should invest in stewardship. While the homemaker's first citizenship obligation is always through her family, we are concerned here with her community and national obligations.

There are those who, ignoring sociological change, blame the increasing breakdown of marriage entirely to the fact that women do not "stay" in the home. There are some who claim that other factors in the disorder of society are responsible. *These believe that when a woman holds to her marriage vows, choosing to stay when she could go, a much better marriage will emerge.*

We also recognize that there are many women who choose to remain single because they have not found that one with whom they wish to establish a home or because they prefer a career—and the woman today may choose.

The development of women into mature persons, and into full citizens in a great democracy, has been increasingly evident. When we tend to be discouraged about such matters and are restless because progress seems so slow, we need only to look back a few years to see how far we have come. Conceding that there are few influential women at the national level in government at present, United Church Women are initiating study-action groups at community and state levels throughout the land, in order that church women may be better prepared to perform governmental responsibilities on any level.

In a relatively short time our nation was born, achieved maturity, and became a leader in the free world. To this country, men came through the years searching for a place where they could worship God as they chose, and to know freedom in all areas of life. They knew that "freedom has a price," but they were willing to pay that price to be free men.

Now, church women have genuine concern in this "land of the free." An evil called "fear" has been creeping into the texture of our society. In a land where a man was innocent until he could be proved guilty, there are those who today smear and "label" citizens of good repute. Loyal American citizens whose lives have been an open book, and whose service to their country has been in such fields as education and religion (with small financial return), are now victims of character assassination. In using wrong methods to find those who are actually Communist sympathizers, we can lose the freedom which has given our nation its greatest strength. No one would deny that our government should apprehend subversives, but it must not use the technique of fascism. If we become divided internally, citizens pitted against citizens, race against race, with those of different religious faiths suspicious of each other, Russia may not have to fire a gun to bring about our downfall. What can *church* women do?

United Church Women believe they have discovered an answer. They know that if our democracy survives as a government "of, for and by *the people*," we must intelligently face difficult problems and accept the necessary disciplines required to be worthy citizens. They believe that patriotism is not something to be used as a political football, or in excessive demonstrations of oratory, but in *living* in local communities, and in the state and nation, the practical ideals of democracy. The goal toward which United Church Women are intentionally moving is "making democracy work" in our homes, schools, and churches, in business, in-

dustrial and professional occupations, and in government itself.

Therefore, at the meeting of the Board of Managers of the General Department of United Church Women of the National Council of Churches in May, 1953, a declaration of loyalty was prepared and a program of action initiated. It is as follows:

A CHRISTIAN DECLARATION OF LOYALTY

"As Christian Americans ~~we~~ are dedicated to maintaining the freedom of all Americans and their institutions. No body of citizens is more alert to the threat of Communist thought and conspiracy both to the Christian faith and to freedom than the Christian churches . . ."

"At this moment when national unity based upon mutual confidence is of paramount importance to our security, men in responsible positions must not, through unsubstantiated charges and blanket indictments, destroy confidence in our American schools, colleges, and universities."¹

"Men in responsible positions and self-appointed groups and individuals are, even now, spreading distrust of churches, of charitable foundations, and of loyal American citizens with whom they disagree.

"The Board of Managers of United Church Women view these threats to American freedom as among the most serious dangers ever faced by our people.

¹From the Statement on Congressional Investigations made by the General Board of the National Council of Churches, March 11, 1953.

“As a witness to our Christian faith we therefore accept the following disciplines and responsibilities:

1. Christian Declaration of Loyalty

This is God's world and we are in his care . . .

We do believe;

Earth might be fair . . .

We will strive to do our part in making it so;

Fear comes of the unknown . . .

We will know;

The young and the uninformed are open to false teaching . . .

We will share the truth;

Forces of dissension would undermine the very institutions that can overcome communism . . .

We will become aware of these forces and throw our strength with the superior force of Christianity;

Many valiant defenders of God-given freedom are being wrongfully accused . . .

We will uphold them;

We ourselves may for our beliefs face disapproval, insinuation, or slander . . .

We will stand;

It is our heritage from the Old Testament, from Greek knowledge, from the American founding fathers and from the Christian gospel of love, to think freely and to speak our thoughts . . .

We do our own thinking;

We are sovereign American citizens, followers of Jesus Christ, children of God . . .

We dare to speak out.

2. Dedication of ourselves as a disciplined group to study, pray, and individually to take courageous stands.

3. Commitment as individuals to:

Maintain confidence and composure;

Do basic reading;

Confer with Congressmen (in home state);

Express basic beliefs to clergymen and laymen and to local school boards concerning personal and academic freedoms; Contact and co-operate with community groups taking similar stands;

Encourage more accurate reporting and more careful interpretation of news;

Encourage the organization of informal study and discussion groups, for both men and women, through council and denominational channels."

Believing it to be a worthy program, the president of United Church Women requested an interview with the President of the United States in order that a committee of United Church Women might share with him their concern and to invite him to bring greetings to their national assembly in Atlantic City, October 5-8, 1953. During the interview which was graciously granted, President Eisenhower spoke of prayer as an

important factor in our national life. The Committee, representing an estimated constituency of ten million, assured the President that the United Church Women will continue to support his stand in behalf of the United Nations, of his disapproval of "book burning," and his desire to hold the world together by peaceful means.

Two years ago when many people were afraid to use the word "peace" for fear they would be labeled "communists," United Church Women took a stand. They believe that war is not the best nor only instrument for settling international disputes. They had seen two world wars, with many of their sons and husbands (and even daughters) paying a terrific toll in disability and death, and with more problems confronting the world *following* the armistice than existed *before* war was declared. Women are confident that their Lord was a man of peace and while He did not give specific directions in this area, the sum total of His life and teaching would indicate that war was not His answer for the solution of world problems. Therefore, having read the book *Peace Can Be Won* by Paul Hoffman, the women arrived at Buck Hill Falls, Pennsylvania, for their annual board meeting. They did not agree with everything Mr. Hoffman said, but the book served as a mental stimulus, along with the spiritual guidance of their New Testaments, in their discussions.

The conclusion they reached was that the noun "peace" is still a good word even if certain people have misused it, and since the followers of Jesus have believed in it for almost two thousand years, they as a

Women's Board were justified in discovering and promoting ways of peace.

The president of United Church Women reported to the Board that she had been receiving letters from all over the country, written by concerned church women who were asking, "Is there something we can *do*? Let us go into the churches of the United States on the World Day of Prayer and there while we pray, let us write letters to our Congressmen, urging that every possible way to peace be explored." Some urged that fasting as well as prayer should precede the writing of the letters.

After hours of warm debate and discussion an active program for ways and means to peace was launched. It declares:

"Peace is possible; war is not inevitable.

Peace is more than cessation of armed conflict.

Peace must be global.

Peace must be built on spiritual and moral values.

Peace must be based on freedom and justice with human decency for all mankind."

The statement continues:

"To Achieve Peace—

"We must accept discipline.

"We must evaluate our activities and our use of time.

"We must consecrate our daily tasks to the ideals of peace.

"We must recognize that no nation alone achieves lasting peace.

"We must realize that peace must be waged continually."

"Building Lasting Peace" has been emphasized on World Community Day, the first Friday of November, as other areas of World Relations have. Many worth-while projects have been sponsored on this day.

United Church Women endorse the idea of the separation of church and state, but they believe that, as worthy citizens, they must express their Christian convictions locally and in the state and nation. A Christian nation must be *Christian*.

United Church Women are finding increasing satisfaction in their May Fellowship luncheons which are held the first Friday in May. On this occasion, women of local communities, representing many denominations and races, come together for fellowship. They have discovered, however, that Christian fellowship is a far deeper experience for a group than just eating together and having interesting programs and discussions. Genuine Christian fellowship comes from serving great causes, of taking risks, of standing together against criticism and even persecution for those principles which are dictated by Christian conscience. United Church Women have experienced such fellowship.

In Dearborn, Mich., when a local radio commentator implied that a respected Methodist minister in town had Communist leanings, the indignant church women consulted a lawyer, began a telephone campaign, marched on the broadcasting station and won a well-deserved apology.

In Des Moines, Iowa, the Council of Church Women worked with the state employment office in a campaign to find older women willing to brush up on their skills and be available for jobs. In one month, applications

for jobs by older women increased from 63 to 100. Similar employment projects are being undertaken by Councils of Church Women in Denver, Hartford, Kansas City, Chicago, and Cleveland.

And in Atlanta, Ga., among the church women's recent projects was a cooperative campaign with the newspapers which succeeded in arousing other civic groups and eventually in having the state legislature amend outdated laws on the admission of mental patients to the state hospital.

Often, of course, the women find themselves fighting hard against inertia, indifference and vested interests on their way to the goal of a more Christian society. Sometimes they lose the first skirmishes, as, for example, Dorothy Dolbey's campaign in 1951 for a place on the city council of Cincinnati. Mrs. Dolbey, in addition to being chairman of the church women's national Interpretation Committee and a past president of the Cincinnati Council of Church Women, was vice-chairman of her city's slum clearance committee, a member of the Better Housing League Board, chairman of the Mayor's Friendly Relations Committee, and a member of the City Advisory Committee on Rent Control. Endorsed by the City Charter Committee and the Independent Republicans of the county, she ran against more highly organized, better financed opposition—and lost by a handful of votes.

Another example was that of the church women of a town in New Jersey, whose fight for more active citizenship ran into opposition—not from professional politicians but from other church people. During the Senate Crime Investigation hearings, the Council of

Church Women ran a full-page pre-election newspaper advertisement, urging "Women Voters of All Faiths" to vote "not for your party" but "for your moral and spiritual convictions." "Are you proud of your community?" the ad asked. "Do you enjoy living among gangsters? Do you want narcotics sold to your children?" The ad urged women voters to know the candidates and vote "for those who have nothing to hide from investigators."

In the commotion that followed the ad, two local churches withdrew their women from membership on the grounds that the Council of Church Women was a political organization making a partisan attack on candidates of one political party. The council was accused of accepting funds from politicians to pay for the ad, although the ad had been paid for out of gifts from individual church women and a loan from the state council's revolving fund. One minister insisted that the ad—which had mentioned no names—was attacking political figures who were members of, and contributors to, his church.

In the November elections, seven months later, the church women ran another advertisement—with the financial aid of the state council of church women—again asking women voters to cast an informed vote for their moral convictions.

The church women do not necessarily agree that "politics" is not a Christian's business. Their standpoint is set forth in outline in two folders sponsored by their national office.

One of them, "The Church Woman and Her Political Responsibility," begins with a quotation from

Proverbs 29:2, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

Asking, "When, if not now? Who, if not you?" the folder suggests that the Christian citizen can help to achieve righteous government by taking an active part in local, state, national, and world affairs; by seeing that good men and women are chosen as candidates; by voting thoughtfully and wisely for persons and issues in which they believe, and by insisting that those they have voted into office observe the highest standards in their official conduct.

Even more specific is a leaflet, "What Can Christians Do in 1952?" which was sponsored by social action groups of the American Baptist Convention, Evangelical and Reformed Church, Congregational Christian Churches, United Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., the Methodist Church and the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ, as well as by United Church Women.

Pointing out that "Christians believe that God is Lord" of every realm of life—including politics—the leaflet makes some concrete suggestions for Christian citizenship. These include: encouraging Christians to consider politics as a vocation; taking an active part in political parties by registering, voting in primary elections, attending party meetings and caucus groups where they can raise questions and influence policy; seeing that other church members are registered voters; asking their ministers to deal with the issues of Christian citizenship from the pulpit; praying for all who vote, helping others to get to the polls on election day.

The United Church Women's organization has been interracial since its formation as the United Council of Church Women in 1941. Nowhere in its constitution or by-laws, or in the rules of procedure, will you find recorded that their organization *must be interracial*. They simply list themselves as Christian women, and their leadership from the beginning has assumed that in a Christian society this meant being interracial. They have proceeded accordingly. No council is barred from membership because it is not interracial, but in 1952 the Board of Managers voted "Next Steps in Race Relations," urging all councils to begin where they now are and move on to the next step. In Christian experience we begin where we are and grow from there toward what we want to become.

The women could share many interesting experiences as they have taken their stand on this important issue. Over and over they were told, "But you cannot have interracial councils in the *South*. It just cannot be done."

We are discovering again that the impossible is happening, and in many local and state councils across the South women of both races are meeting together for prayer and for the work of the Kingdom. There is no "fanfare" nor "blowing of trumpets" but quietly, like a *leaven*, through experience and education, the women are testing their Christian beliefs to see if they will stand examination and be strengthened because they have proved in practice what they have declared by statement. It is doubtful whether councils in other areas of the country, with the law back of them, have

made more progress than have these courageous Christian women, south of the Mason-Dixon Line.

In many other areas of our national life, United Church Women are expressing their concerns. They had a definite share in defending UNESCO in California. A national leader in radio has testified, after a trip across the United States, that the most effective education regarding the United Nations is being done by the United Church Women of the National Council of Churches under the direction of the Christian World Relations Department.

The most significant service the church women may render the nation today is in sharing their spiritual ideals. This has always been their major contribution as mothers and homemakers. However, years ago as they read their Bibles and prayed, revelation came to them that if Jesus said "Go tell" to the women after His resurrection, then that meant a directive for today also. One can hardly imagine the courage it took for those women (whose "place" was definitely in the home) to go to the churches for prayer and to form women's organizations. It is dangerous business to "tamper" with prayer, if one prays sincerely, believing—and those women of yesterday believed! It is said that in the early 1800's these words were found in the early records of a certain denomination:

"The women may meet to carry on their work, but if there is any praying to be done, they must call in a minister or an elder because no one knows what these misguided females might pray for."

How wise were those men because it was that for which "those misguided females" prayed that spurred

the missionary enterprise and sent thousands of committed Christians around the world to share the gospel message.

The women's need for prayer continued throughout the years and has culminated in the well-known World Day of Prayer which is observed on the first Friday following Ash Wednesday each year. In 1953, the World Day of Prayer was observed in 118 countries around the world and in 1,700 communities throughout the United States. "Love Offerings" on this day amounted to over \$300,000 for the home and foreign mission enterprises of the National Council of Churches. Prayer is spiritual *power*.

The gravest situation the United Council of Church Women faced after its formation in 1941 was whether or not to accept the invitation to become a General Department of the National Council of Churches. Since the United Council of Church Women was a democratic organization, the leaders could not make the decision. Those wise leaders, Mrs. Harper Sibley, president, Mrs. Ruth Moughey Worrell, executive secretary, and later Mrs. W. Murdoch MacLeod, encouraged the church women across the nation to discuss the question in all of their nineteen hundred local and state councils of church women and then to vote through their state presidents at the annual board meeting in Los Angeles in 1949.

Probably the most urgent question the women had to settle for themselves was whether or not they could be as free within the National Council of Churches to initiate action growing out of their prayer periods as they had been as a separate organization. They knew

that in the past their voice, directed by Christian conscience, had been one of influence in the nation. They did not want it stifled!

Again, the women prayed, and the unanimous vote was to go into the National Council of Churches and become an integral part of the total church. No one was naïve enough to believe that this would be an easy role to assume, and that judgment has been justified. However, rough though the way has been at times, the present leaders of the United Church Women believe that the decision of the National Board at Los Angeles was right, and they are determined that this Department will be a worthy part of the church and never lose its privilege of courageous witness. The method of accomplishing this may be different from that of the past, but the results (Christian action when it is needed) must always be assured.

As the women came into the National Council of Churches they were determined to be self-supporting. It has been their observation that if they are able to "pay their own bills," they have a stronger voice in the councils of the church! So it was that at Los Angeles in 1949 they initiated a plan for a fund to be raised which would ensure support as they developed the new Department, and would also make possible the initiating of worthy new projects. They called on the Protestant church women of the United States to "stand and be counted" for Christ and His church. They were to enroll in their own states and present a gift of a dollar in appreciation for the Ecumenical Movement which is uniting more closely the Christians around the world.

With only a few months before the biennial assembly which was to be held in Cincinnati in November, with a very small national staff and the volunteer women across the country, they set out to accomplish this enormous task. By November, when they reported at their assembly, they had raised over \$300,000. There has been money enough to support the Department during its formative years, and tremendous projects have been carried out with this fund under the close supervision of the Ecumenical Register Committee. One of the most worthy gifts has been the check for \$10,000 which has gone annually for three years to the World Council of Churches. Much of this money has been used by the *Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Church*.

United Church Women believe that greater strength has come in the formation of the General Department, because now the united work of women is done not only through the interdenominational state and local councils of church women, but also through the women's denominational groups of the National Council of Churches. Thus the General Department of United Church Women is a two-legged body! The denominational presidents and executives have been most cooperative, and their interest and advice have been a boon and a blessing to the work.

The Ecumenical Register fund, according to the directive from the 1950 assembly, was to be spent in three years. So it was that in 1951, the administrative committee of the General Department directed the president to appoint a permanent committee to formulate a plan for the permanent financial undergirding of

the Department. This was done, and the final plan, "The Annual Fellowship Fund," was tested and endorsed by many groups and committees, including the state presidents of United Church Women and the national denominational presidents. There are only twenty out of the thirty denominations in the National Council of Churches which have women's organizations. The sixteen national denominational presidents signing the endorsement were:

- Mrs. Frank G. Brooks, The Methodist Church
Mrs. W. Verne Buchanan, Presbyterian Church, U.
S. A.
Mrs. W. Bayard Buckham, Congregational Christian
Churches
Mrs. E. Roy Corman, Evangelical and Reformed
Church
Mrs. R. T. Fetherston, Seventh Day Baptist Gen-
eral Conference
Mrs. Anne E. Heath, African Methodist Episcopal
Church
Mrs. Maurice B. Hodge, American Baptist Conven-
tion
Mrs. Rossie Thompson Hollis, Colored Methodist
Episcopal Church
Mrs. W. H. Hopper, Presbyterian Church in the
U. S.
Mrs. Ralph Jordan, Council of Community Churches
Mary A. Pennybacker, The Protestant Episcopal
Church
Ocie G. Perry, Church of God
Mrs. Clarence J. Robinson, Society of Friends—Five
Years Meeting

Mrs. J. Balmer Showers, Evangelical United Brethren Church

Miss Jessie M. Trout, Disciples of Christ

Mrs. Sailsman W. Weller, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church

United Church Women are increasingly learning the art of good public relations. The director of this department, with her fine committee, is rapidly enlarging the program, using all media of communication. This committee was responsible for a well-planned conference in New York, held for church women from over the country interested in developing their own public relations programs in local and state areas. It has sponsored two luncheons for the professional women serving the New York area in radio, press, and television, and is constantly on the alert to increase its efficiency.

Under the supervision of a new staff director, leadership training has a "new look." It is becoming a part of the total program, not being assigned to a compartment of its own. Many worth-while projects are under way, the most significant being that of taking this new plan of leadership training out into state and local councils. It is quite evident that in the next few years, the church women of the nation will know more of those things we can do better together, than in our own separate denominations.

The Church Woman, well-known journal of United Church Women, is a "MUST" in our organized work. It keeps us informed on up-to-the-minute news, in touch with national and world issues, and aware of what other state and local councils of church women

are doing. Its editor is trained for this responsibility and has a keen understanding of the world and its needs. We must be *informed Christians!*

Perhaps the most urgent problem now facing the Department is helping state and local councils of church women work out their relationships with the Councils of Churches. While the local and state groups will probably want to follow the national plan, great caution is needed in order that councils of church women may have a worthy place in the new relationship, and not be lost in so broad a concept that their Christian witness is stifled. Under the very wise and capable leadership of Dr. Glenn W. Moore, a committee has been appointed at the direction of the General Board of the National Council of Churches to study the entire problem of field relationships within the National Council, and the leaders of the Department of United Church Women have great faith in what may be accomplished.

United Church Women can rejoice that in three years their Department rests on a firm foundation; that it has made progress in its relationships within the National Council of Churches; and that it continues to search for ways in which church women may have a more secure, integral place in the *total church*. There is every indication that the Department will remain self-supporting, and that its call for Christian action will continue to be heard and heeded.

The Church Woman and her Nation! May she always be a power for good, and an eternal blessing to mankind!

The Church Woman and Her World

In my observation, the church women are doing a better job of interpretive thinking on international questions than any other group in America. By their persistent study and personalized viewpoints, they are seeking the human values back of the headlines. Since cold facts seem to make cold wars, we need Christianized imagination quite as much as information.

Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, Minister
Christ Church (Methodist),
New York, N. Y.

CHAPTER V

The Church Woman and Her World

A REVEALING STATEMENT from Malvina Lindsay of *The Washington Post* declares: "Even now, despite the fact that a new world is in the making, the world makers generally belong to the school of socially obsolete gentlemen who think that a lady's place at national and international meetings is where officials' wives are all found—in a spectators' box wearing a corsage. . . . Hence it looks as if women, in order to bring their viewpoints into international affairs . . . will have to make nuisances of themselves the way their grandmothers did when they wanted to go to the ballot boxes or to have the county poor farm cleaned up. This role is distasteful to most women, yet they recognize they cannot afford to let their new international privileges fall into disuse. . . . *There is too much at stake for them to depend on the devious and uncertain charm school approach.*"

Other women, also, with keen minds and deep concerns about the world situation, believe the same. With "the world on fire," women know that an understanding of great international problems will require the insights and wisdom of us all. They do not have the

patience to use the indirect method of "influence" or the "charm-school approach." They want to carry their share of the responsibility as mature persons and never before in the United States have mature persons been so needed.

The church women's approach to international affairs began long ago in the field of world missions. Believing the gospel should go around the world, the women set themselves to the task of sending and sharing. What happened was inevitable—an interest in the world and its problems. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."¹

When the women brought their "butter and egg" money to the church, adding it to the "rags and rummage sale" money of other women to send missionaries to far places, an active interest in those countries developed. They studied their maps, and "names" turned into "persons." Indifference was supplanted by friendship and what seemed "odd" and "different" became understandable.

The concept of missions for some time was to "save the heathen," and to *send* the gospel. Along with sharing the gospel, the missionaries taught people to read and write. They urged young people to continue their education and from the mission fields around the world young men, and eventually young women, went to the "sending countries" for further study in all vocational areas. Young nationals who today criticize the mission programs of the churches (justified though they may be in some instances) still

¹Matt. 6:21.

must face the fact that if the mission schools had not been developed many of them would not have had the opportunity for an education. This is especially true of women because it is in the countries where the message of Jesus has gone (shared by the missionaries from the cooperating Protestant churches) that women have been lifted above the status of slave or servant of man.

The whole tone of the foreign missionary enterprise is changing. We find our missionary leaders in the process of genuine soul searching. There has not been a meeting held in recent years where there was more earnestness of purpose or more evidence of greater humility than that of the Foreign Missions Division of the National Council of Churches held in Toronto, January, 1952. There was no boasting nor empty eloquence. The foreign missions' leaders were facing a world desperately in need of direction, and the problems seemed almost beyond human solution. They were seeking for a better approach, better methods to be used for today. They were not on the defensive, sensitive lest someone criticize what they had been doing or had failed to achieve. The nationals from the younger churches were given the opportunity to speak from their hearts, and criticisms were accepted and weighed. They were searching, honestly wanting the right answers. If there were better methods of administration, they must find them. If programs and content needed changing, that must be done.

One of the foreign missionary leaders, when questioned, frankly stated:

"There is not only a hunger for increasing unity, there is an incessant demand on the field that this should come about. The blocks to Christian unity on the whole are not in the younger churches, but are in the traditional church relationships of the mission boards. I feel that in the not too distant future, we are going to have to listen to these voices of the younger churches or we will find ourselves outside the fellowship. The younger churches of the mission field are as receptive to the voice of the calling of God as are our churches here, and the shame of disunity is a grave burden upon them spiritually."

The church women's deep concern for a share in sending the gospel around the world has grown as the concept of "missions" has changed and developed. Their horizons have been pushed back as greater needs and opportunities have been presented.

An Ohio farm woman, some years ago when she was asked how other women could have her zest for living when they, too, were over eighty years of age, explained: "Why, never stop *wanting*. Not material things, but goals to reach. Just the minute I'd get something accomplished, I'd decide on some new thing I wanted to do. In that way, life is exciting and interesting and you don't have time to think about your aches and pains. I want to be alive until I die and that's more than some folks are."

The little old lady's answer reminded me of my first trip across the Mojave Desert. As we drove along the highway, it seemed that as we moved toward the horizon, the more distant it became. So it has been

with church women and their world interest. We see today vast new opportunities for sharing the message of Christ by taking it not alone into geographical areas, and helping in the fields of education, evangelism and medicine, but by increasing our understanding of the cultures of other countries, and in giving help as it is needed in the scientific and economic life of these people. As needs are discovered, answers must be found. Some new areas of service include a credit structure for the underprivileged in order that they may obtain the necessary financial aid for their farm operations, soil conservation, sanitation, and nutrition. It is a bold new idea—not giving “charity” but helping people help themselves.

Women realize that we must build bridges of friendship across the rivers of hate. For this reason they are supporting the work of Church World Service, and the Christian Rural Overseas Program, along with other worth-while causes. These are great reconciling influences which have built good will throughout the world toward our country. The women know, however, that sharing food and clothing is not enough. Charity bails the boat, but justice stops the leak. It is not enough to send our surpluses; we must minister to people with self-help programs.

The church women understand Dr. Frank Laubach so well when he pleads for the United States to send “amazing kindness” along with the needed commodities. Church women are so often accused of being too idealistic, yet they are confident that the application of the very practical teachings of Jesus to the ills of the world would bring us out of the present chaos. Dr. Laubach

has opened a new world to countless thousands with his program of world literacy. To what end, however, do we teach people to be literate and then let the Communists supply them with literature? Dr. Laubach insists that Communists are flooding many countries with materials written on the level of the people and in the language they understand. He tries to impress upon the American people the need for literature for the people in undeveloped areas. Leaflets are now needed on child care, sanitation, improving pasture, and making two plants of clover grow where one grew before. Dr. Laubach urges American audiences to try to understand what it would mean if gifted writers (now using their talent to advertise soap, toothpaste, liquor and cigarettes) would dedicate their skill to preparing the kind of literature that would give the information and helpful ideas so badly needed. "The Voice of America" would then be heard all over Asia and Africa and contact be made with the people we want so much to know and help.

There are at least four areas where United Church Women are making significant contributions:

First: their program, with all of its ramifications, is one of the strongest forces in pulling the churches together. In the early days of the missionary enterprise, women accepted the need for the gospel's being sent around the world without spending too much time discussing it. When they "got the big idea," they immediately set to work to see that it was done!

A member of the Friends Church has shared a quotation from Eckart written in the seventeenth cen-

tury: "A life of activity is better than one of contemplation in so far as we actively spend in service the income derived from contemplation." Women began their work undergirded with prayer and have held to prayer through the years. Moreover, they have certainly been spending in service the income derived from their contemplation!

They learned in their active service years ago that there were many projects they could promote *together* which they could not do separately. They did not spend long hours in discussions on the desirability of Christian unity, nor did they debate their differences in theological concepts. They just set about getting the Lord's work done and, *in His service*, they experienced unity of the heart and spirit. There was no National Council of Churches, but three national women's organizations combined in 1941 to form the United Council of Church Women. This Council adopted a purpose, which is used today:

"PURPOSE, To unite church women in their allegiance to their Lord and Savior *Jesus Christ*, through a program looking to their integration in the total life and work of the church and to the building of a world Christian community."

They did not wait to get "denominational approval" or to set up barriers as to who could work "as equals" with other members of the church. They assumed that the heavenly Father, knowing the great needs of the world, would bless their efforts as they came together for prayer and service. The women believe that when Jesus prayed asking, "That they may be one,

even as we are one,"¹ He was not giving an example of prayer, nor criteria for organizing prayer, but was asking the Father for help in accomplishing that which He believed needed to be done. Women believe this prayer is a universal and perpetual directive. They have promoted the unity of Protestant, Evangelical and Orthodox churches. They fully endorse the statement which came out of the 1925 Stockholm conference: "A divided church cannot save a sinful world," and the statement in the message prepared at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948, "We intend to stay together."

When the Willingen Missionary Conference was held in the summer of 1952, United Church Women not only sent one of their staff members to represent their interests in this great world missionary meeting, but also helped finance the travel expenses of several of the women from the younger churches in order that these women might share their viewpoints at the conference and carry home to their countries the suggestions and plans of that experience.

United Church Women saw at once the possibilities of the 1953 emphasis, launched by the National Council of Churches, "Christ Calls to Mission and Unity. What can the churches do?" They not only gave it their support and promotion but used it as the theme for their assembly in Atlantic City, October 5-8, 1953. There, in a most dramatic way, they were aroused to greater interest in the mission and unity of the church.

Second: United Church Women work tirelessly for great worthy secular causes such as United Nations and

¹John 17:11.

Point Four programs. The staff member in the Department of Christian World Relations is their official observer at the United Nations. They have worked to defeat Universal Military Training because they believe this method is not necessary for the adequate defense of our country. They participated in the effort of Protestants to defeat the plan for sending an ambassador from the United States to the Vatican because they believe that government is not justified in sending a representative to the headquarters of any religious body in the world. Certainly this would be no more appropriate than sending an ambassador to the World Council of Churches or to a world Jewish organization.

When the United Church Women work in secular areas, they try to inoculate with a Christian philosophy. To them, the spiritual must be found in all areas of service; it is the foundation on which the cornerstone must rest if the social structure would measure up to divine specifications.

When representatives from certain women's organizations in the United States were invited by the State Department to visit Germany in the interest of women's organizations there, United Church Women sent their executive in the Department of Christian World Relations. She was well qualified for this work because she not only could represent spiritual interests in such a group but could speak the German language and understand the people. The leaders of United Church Women have been constantly on the alert to share spiritually in the great concerns of the world.

In the third place: United Church Women have supported major efforts in behalf of world understand-

ing and brotherhood. They have worked tirelessly for the program of home and foreign missions of the National Council.

Members of the staff of the Department of United Church Women work in close cooperation with the Division of Life and Work of the National Council of Churches. The Department tries to see world needs over and above the program of foreign missions. The president of United Church Women is a member of the executive board of the Division of Life and Work, and serves on several committees of the Department of International Justice and Goodwill. These experiences provide her with more knowledge upon which to base decisions and to give guidance in the various areas of world relations.

United Church Women are officially represented at the annual meetings of the Division of Christian Education. In February, 1953, their president addressed the Annual Luncheon of the Division. She declared: "The jungle is here also in this country we love. It is not the jungle of tigers, panthers, bush and savage, but the jungle of ideas, of misunderstanding and confusion." She called for an "all-out" mobilization of the spiritual forces of the nation to undergird our own lives and to become a vital force in the world of nations.

In 1953, United Church Women had a share in a big, new idea, which came from a leader of the Presbyterian U. S. A. women. It was: "Suppose we send from our country to the mission stations around the world, an 'ambassador of good will'—one who has great spiritual depth, adequate training, and a genuine love for people of all races. She should be of a dark color

because the majority of the people to whom she will be sent are dark." The idea was so tremendous, so full of possibilities for greater understanding among the peoples of the world, that it immediately aroused their enthusiasm. Eagerly, the American Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, and the United Church Women joined the Presbyterian U. S. A. women and contributed to the fund that would make possible such a world tour. The "ambassador" chosen was Mrs. Rosa Page Welch, noted soprano of Chicago. Through the years she has been "singing her way" across the United States and across the barriers of ill will, segregation, and prejudice. She and others like her have demonstrated a method for breaking down barriers which is more effective than preaching. Even in their most enthusiastic planning, the women did not realize what the spending of their dedicated money would mean to their neighbors around the world and to themselves. They are increasingly realizing what wise spending of material resources can accomplish.

Mrs. Welch sang her way around the world, building good will wherever she went: She carried healing messages from Japan to the Philippines, encouraged soldiers whom she met on the train, spoke with an understanding that was like healing balm to the dark peoples of the earth. She has returned, her heart on fire! Now she prefers to speak rather than to sing in order that she may stir the people of the United States, both black and white, to see the agony of the world and our responsibility to ameliorate it. God will continue to help her find the expression needed in song or in spoken word, because He uses those whose motives are

right and whose spirit keeps the necessary humility to truly represent Him. During the years to come, this investment in Mrs. Welch will pay dividends around the world wherever her admirers remember her dedication and Christian witness.

From Africa, Walter D. Cardwell writes regarding Mrs. Welch's visit:

"Tonight a thousand people far up the Congo River in the heart of Africa had an unusual thrill. They heard an attractive Negro woman from the U. S. A. sing some of the beautiful spirituals known and loved so well in her land. But before she sang, she said something that struck a responsive chord in their hearts. She said, 'I have visited many lands on this trip, but I have looked forward most to my visit to Africa, for your grandfathers were my grandfathers, and in coming here I feel that I have come back home.' An audible response welled up from the heart of every Congolese present. Never before had a visitor from faraway America ever said that.

"The African of today is dreaming and changing—dreaming of putting to use his new-found powers, and changing his old ways all too quickly for some new ways he does not yet understand. It gave our people here courage and vision to see at first hand one of their own race who has achieved distinction, and yet who can proudly say, 'I am one of you. As I look at you I see my father, my mother, and my sister.' And more than that, Rosa Page Welch said, 'My first schooling was in a mission school, too. Many of my best opportunities and greatest joys have come because of Jesus Christ and His Church. You here in Africa are now learning

many things, but what you learn from Him is more important than all the rest.' As we missionaries looked about us and saw the hundreds of students in the audience, we prayed that these words might not be quickly forgotten.

"It was amusing to see how the Congolese women of the church claimed their distinguished visitor from the U. S. They said, 'Now this time it's a woman who has come to visit us and to see the Church in Congo. She is our visitor.' So they wanted to know if their guest would eat their food. They collected eggs and fruit and vegetables from each home to present to her. The church at Lotumbe sent two women to meet her as their delegates, and they followed her everywhere as though they were agents of a secret service charged to guard her!

"Rosa Page sang twice at Congo Christian Institute at chapel, and also led the students in learning some of the spirituals she sang. Her audience consisted of about 110 future preachers and teachers for the Congo, and she quickly sensed one of the needy spots in the mind of the African; namely, that of learning to think about their own responsibility. Later as she sat talking to the African instructors at the Institute, and to their wives, they wanted to know about the Negro in the U. S. A. Did he have his own church? How many Negro preachers were there? Were the Negro churches in the U. S. interested in their African brethren? If so, why don't they send out missionaries too? These questions were all answered fairly, and then the group was told about Booker T. Washington, George

W. Carver, Mary McLeod Bethune, Ralph Bunche, and others of similar stature."

In the fourth place, the resources of United Church Women have been used for world understanding among women. A contribution of \$10,000 from the Ecumenical Register Fund previously mentioned has been designated annually for the last three years to the World Council of Churches. It was understood that the gift would make possible along with other things the continuing development of the World Council of Churches' Commission on "The Life and Work of Women in the Church." This Commission has been meeting under the leadership of Miss Sarah Chakko of India, and Dr. Kathleen Bliss of England. On January 1, 1953, Miss Madeline Barot of France was secured as full-time executive with her office in Geneva, Switzerland. This is not a commission of women, but is composed of both men and women who study the life and work of women in the churches around the world. A survey was made by the committee and the results are found in an excellent book by Kathleen Bliss called *The Service and Status of Women in the Churches*.

The committee was also responsible for the preparation of a study outline on "Man-Woman Relationship." It served as the basis for discussion when the committee met in Oxford, England, September, 1952. Dr. Mary E. Lyman, professor of English Bible at Union Theological Seminary, helped prepare the study outline and attended the Oxford meeting. Since Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel, who had been representing United Church Women, could not go, the president of United Church Women served as her alternate.

The president prayerfully reviewed theology in preparation for the meeting because she knew the women on the Continent would insist on a biblical and theological approach to the question. As she studied, she realized that she had a problem in connection with the discussion of the Bliss book: *Could* she speak for the church women of the United States? How could she interpret their status since the areas of service varied so greatly in the many denominations? The questions led to the current study of the status of the women in American churches which is reported in Chapter Three.

American members of the Commission are: Dr. Mary E. Lyman, Mrs. Theodore O. Wedel and Mrs. Frank Brooks; Dr. Glora Wysner and Mrs. James D. Wyker serve as consultants. It is possible that Miss Madeline Barot, with her training and experience, may lead the church women of the world to a closer fellowship and even help them achieve "full membership" in the church. While in the United States in January, 1953, Miss Barot said in a luncheon address, "Recently we have become greatly concerned because the church does not seem to be making the impact it should on the lives of people. Women are less constitutionally-minded than men, less attached to structure. Within the church they have felt imprisoned by structures which they had no part in creating. They have come to realize that the real question for them and for the church is this: What is the will of God for His church on earth? And this involves the question of what is the will of God in regard to man-woman relationships within the church." European churches, she said, have become convinced that they must restudy this relationship in the light of

the Bible, the doctrine of the church, and sociological developments of the modern world.

There are those in the United States who believe that "The Commission on the Life and Work of Women" will make little progress because the churches on the Continent are so overly concerned with theology and biblical interpretation. However, United Church Women are deeply interested in this Commission and believe it has the possibility of becoming a force for good in the world church.

American church women have come a long way since those first prayer meetings so long ago when they dared to organize and venture out into Christian service. Their world today is far more baffling than it was in the early eighteen hundreds, but the women are much better equipped to understand it.

We should relinquish gladly "the charm school approach" and step out into the realm of responsible service! It is a great privilege to be a church woman in today's world.

The Church Woman and the Future

An instinctive appreciation of the cost and continuity of life has given to womanhood a special fitness for service in the Christian Church. Her creative efforts toward a decent chance for the children of the world finds its best expression through the Church and its agencies.

Bishop William C. Martin,

President, The National Council of the
Churches of Christ in the
United States of America

CHAPTER VI

The Church Woman and the Future

THE CONTINUITY OF LIFE is an established fact. Nature proves it as earth becomes barren during the winter months and then bursts into new life in the spring. Through the centuries, man has attempted to put into writing his reasons for believing this basic fact that there is life after death.

To most mothers, this fact is indisputable. She who has helped create life believes that it flows on indestructible.

Whatever he may achieve in his business and professional life, or however much his name is used as one of influence, nothing satisfies a true father more than to have his son "follow in his steps"—attend his college, choose his profession. He sees his name, his ideals, his dreams living on in continuity of life long after he is gone. Many a mother who has longed to be a writer, an artist, or a musician, but who has been caught in the burdens of home responsibilities, financial disaster, or poor health, has seen her dreams fulfilled in and through her children. A mother was heard to say: "Somehow, I never could 'manage' my children as I wanted to do. I was nervous, uneasy, and very busy.

But my daughter is a wonderful mother! Now, through her, I am the mother *I* always longed to be."

Another mother expressed the same idea, this way: "I love people, and I believe in their eternal goodness and what they *can* become. I have spent my life in religious work trying to help people be better than they are. I watched my daughter grow into womanhood, interested not in a religious vocation but in the teaching profession. I saw in her strong young body and lovely face, all that I as a girl had longed to be. My joy knew no bounds when her father returned from a visit with her and reported: 'You know, it was a thrill to see her doing her job [working in the public library while her husband is in selective service], looking after her apartment, and cooking good meals. But the real thrill came as she told me about her children's story hour at the library. Her face was radiant, there was a sparkle in her eyes as she exclaimed: "Daddy, there's nothing more exciting than watching a group of children who look indifferent and even resentful as I begin my story, especially the boys who are restless and bored; then as I progress with my story, they are out on the edge of their chairs, interested and alert. They are lost completely in the story, and they forget to be assertive, resentful and mean. They're *good!*"' My heart rejoiced as her father finished, 'Like mother, like daughter.' I was seeing my dreams live on in the life of my child, and I know my daughter will find in motherhood that same satisfaction."

So it is with the longings, the dreams of mankind. Throughout the centuries, man has struggled to be better than he is and, in spite of all the setbacks (the wars,

the cruelties, the inhumanities of man to man), the trend is steadily upward. Man has tried to explain himself philosophically. Through years of military and political power, there have been men like Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Amos, on down to that One called Jesus, the Christ, and His followers, who have proclaimed justice and called men to higher levels of responsibility. These men, perhaps, could not completely understand that *drive* within them, that urge that would not let them rest. Why were they not content, as other men, with their professions, their families? Why must they bother so much with the wrongs and injustices of the world? Things have always been that way—why try to change them? But that spiritual force in man has driven him on to make the world a better place, and mankind more worthy of its Maker.

It is difficult for some people to understand that *this same drive, this same indescribable power, is in the heart of woman, also*. She, too, longs to “become,” to fulfill. She is discovering within herself that longing, that motivation to be more than just a reflection of her husband, or the one who gives birth to children. Every normal mother wants that—but, today, she is asking for more. With education, she is discovering that God gave her a mind to *use*, and now she is determined to use it.

God also gave her *understanding*. A cherished record to most women is the beloved story of the mother of Jesus. How Mary must have wondered about her son as He, at the age of twelve, questioned the doctors in the temple, and then said to her, “Do you not know

that I must be about my Father's business?" It is not strange that "she pondered these sayings in her heart."¹

How Mary must have struggled to understand this son of hers—so different from her other boys. The others fitted into community life, no doubt doing the usual respectable things that are assumed in a good, religious home. But Jesus—how he embarrassed the family! He challenged the hypocrites in the church, defended the underprivileged, and said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."²

"What will people think?" is the old, worn question even in modern life, and Mary must have been asked that question—many times!

But she never relinquished her faith in her son and when he was crucified, after only three brief years of ministry, she was at the foot of His cross, still trying, no doubt, to understand.

God seems to have given to many women, as to many men, this longing to help make a better world. This *inner urge* must have been in the heart of Antoinette Brown, the first ordained woman minister in the United States. Why was she not satisfied to take the "Ladies' Literary Course" at Oberlin? Why did she insist on the one in theology? Why was she not satisfied with her fine husband, and later with being the mother of six children? As a child of God, is it surprising that she, too, longed to "tell the story" of her Lord?

There was no discussion nor even interest in the subject of "Man-Woman Relationship" at the time of the

¹Luke 2:46-52.

²Matt. 19:24.

Reformation, nor in the idea that women might want to have "full membership" in the church. Luther and other reformers brought over into this new movement much of what they had known in the past, and for so long "the place" of women in the church has gone unchallenged. *Perhaps modern church men will carry on the Reformation—helping the women of the churches achieve "full membership"; thus making the movement in reality a Reformation.*

It is interesting to note that progress is being made in all areas of church life, and that women as persons have been more fully recognized in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. In answer to a question, Dr. Luther A. Weigle, Chairman of the Standard Bible Committee, writes under date of July 2, 1953:

"At some time early in the process of revising the New Testament, a woman wrote me, sending a copy of the book by Lee Anna Starr, LL.D., entitled *The Bible Status of Woman*. This book was published in 1926 by the Fleming H. Revell Company.

"The woman sending this book expressed the hope that the Committee might take its arguments into account. Each member of the Committee read the book and in the end the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament went far to meet the points that Dr. Starr makes. We did not accept her position on all points for there are places where she overstates her case. But in general her book is well conceived and sound.

"The point at which we were all convinced that the King James Version is in masculine error is with respect to the translation of indefinite pronouns. I transcribe a paragraph from my book entitled *The English New*

Testament from Tyndale to the Revised Standard Version, page 118, in which I state the conclusion to which we came.

“Indefinite pronouns, referring to any person, use the masculine forms in the Greek, just as we in English often use the pronoun “he” in a general statement including both sexes. The King James Version overdoes this masculine habit by its general use of “no man” and “any man” where the meaning is “no one” or “any one.” This practice limits many statements unduly, and results in occasional infelicities. In Matthew 11:27 it is said that “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father.” The word “but” is ambiguous here, for it may mean that men do not know the son but do know the Father. That is absurd, but if the meaning is “no man knoweth the Son, except the Father,” it involves a worse absurdity by implying that the Father is a man. The Greek is perfectly clear, and ASV clearly translates it: “No one knoweth the Son, save the Father.” R.S.V. has: “No one knows the Son except the Father.””

“You will find that where the King James Version translates the indefinite pronoun by ‘any man’ the Revised Standard Version usually says ‘any one’; where the King James Version says ‘no man’ the Revised Standard Version says ‘no one.’”

Surely modern woman can be satisfied only when she attains her utmost capability. She dares not, like Lot’s wife, look back wistfully to where she has been, but rather on to where she is supposed to go!

United Church Women have made much progress in achieving for more women a greater privilege of

service in the total church, but they have much yet to do.

There are two areas needing immediate attention.

First, United Church Women have developed their relationship with the various denominations; now we must launch out to a greater degree in fellowship with women's secular organizations, supporting their programs in so far as they are in accord with our own, but opposing the program of any organization if we believe it to be inimical to the good of the nation and opposed to world brotherhood.

Secondly, we must also work more effectively with women who belong to other religious faiths. We have, of necessity, given so much time in the past three years to strengthening the ties of our denominational relationships, that we have not given a just portion of our time to fellowship with women of other religious faiths.

Church women have a significant role to play in the destiny of mankind.

Many women will make significant contributions as business and professional women and as worthy citizens of their country.

But when ten million church women are charged with the inspiration to mature and to achieve, who can estimate their potential productive capacity? Formidable barriers are disappearing, as indicated in the chapters of this book, but our greatest obstacle is our own complacency! The responsibility of being a Christian has not yet sufficiently aroused us to dedicate ourselves wholly (whatever our vocation) to being ministers of the Living Christ. In fact, our struggle is far greater than the recognition of women for ordination;

our struggle is to enlist every church woman as a Christian minister within her own realm of domestic, occupational and civic responsibility.

Women, as Sir Galahad, so often seek the treasures of life in some far-off land, only to come back and discover that life's greatest treasure is within a household where there are growing children to be nourished with discriminative thinking and Christian faith as well as with balanced diets. This does not mean *just being at home*, for there are many mothers who pride themselves on "never leaving my home, not for a single night" who are poor mothers indeed. Parenthood is qualitative as well as quantitative. What the women of our generation plant in the hearts of their children will reap returns in tomorrow's manhood and womanhood. The most fertile ground in which we can plant the seeds of peace and brotherhood, the best place to resist aggression and influence the Pentagon, is right in the hearts of growing children.

Moreover, we have almost unlimited opportunity to influence the Christian contribution of our husbands in their performance of the world's work. There are leaders in the church today who are baffled at the immature religious thinking of many American men. The men read the newspapers and are versed in "politics"; they know business and industry; they can discuss labor and management. Yet, in their religious experience they are often as children, swayed by any wind that blows across their intellectual paths, swept by leadership that is often immature, unscrupulous and antisocial. These leaders use the tactics of hate, bigotry, dissension and fear. We have a double responsi-

bility, not only to grow into mature persons ourselves, but to help our husbands and our children grow also to be spiritually mature.

“Full membership” for women within the church is not only possible—it is becoming a reality. The preceding chapters disclose the fact that there is much progress in the church today and that, while many women in several denominations still feel restricted, many other women have but to go in and “possess the land”! Recent questionnaires have proved that when certain national denominational boards have been asked, “Why have you not had women on your Board?” the answer has been “We just hadn’t thought about it.”

Can we claim our heritage? Is it not possible for women to continue beyond the realm of *influence* and to accept the responsibility of full membership within the church?

Church women *are* essential in the scheme of things.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion.—Amos 6:1.



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She received her B.S. degree in education from Columbia University (New York), and studied at The College of the Bible (Lexington, Ky.). Mrs. Wyker was ordained by Disciples of Christ in 1929. In June, 1952, she was awarded an honorary D.D. degree from Transylvania College (Lexington, Ky.).

Mrs. Wyker has served as president of the Ohio Council of Church Women; on the board of managers of the United Christian Missionary Society; on the board of directors of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ; represented Disciples of Christ at the Constituting Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Amsterdam, Holland, 1948); as acting president of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ (1952); represented American church women at the meeting of the Commission on the Life and Work of Women in the Churches in Oxford, England (1952); and has been selected as a delegate to the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Ill. (1954).

Mr. and Mrs. Wyker reside on a small farm at Columbia, Mo., where Mr. Wyker is doing rural church extension service with the new Rural Seminary of the Bible College at the University of Missouri. They have a married daughter and a son, who is a senior at Ohio State University. Mrs. Wyker is among the most sought-after religious leaders today. Her vibrant personality and dynamic addresses have endeared her to church people everywhere.

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